

SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT HIS POLITY, LIFE AND TIMES

In Three Books

I History

II Literature and Criticism

III The Risālo of Shāh Abdul Latīf

SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT:

HIS POETRY, LIFE AND TIMES

*A Study of Literary, Social and Economic Conditions in
Eighteenth Century Sind*

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DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF SIND

Oh, how I feel a part of you, I feel
I feel the pulse of you, I feel
A little bit of you, a little bit
How I feel a part of you, I feel
No, I feel a part of you, I feel
Yes, I feel a part of you, I feel
They are all of you, I feel
I feel a part of you, I feel

Oh, how I feel a part of you, I feel
And how I feel a part of you, I feel
The dream of you, the dream of you
The dream of you, the dream of you
The dream of you, the dream of you
I feel a part of you, I feel
I feel a part of you, I feel
The dream of you, the dream of you
The dream of you, the dream of you

No, I feel a part of you, I feel
No, I feel a part of you, I feel
No, I feel a part of you, I feel
With a part of you, I feel
And how I feel a part of you, I feel
That no, I feel a part of you, I feel
The dream of you, the dream of you
The dream of you, the dream of you

PREFACE

THE collection of mystical poems known as the *Risālo* of Shāh Abdul Latif of Bhit is the only classic which the language of Sind has yet produced in the realm of deeply imaginative literature. The poems were composed in the first half of the eighteenth century. They are the work of a natural poet of Sūfī leanings. Their poetical excellence is as remarkable as the depth of the philosophy and religion which they display. It is the misfortune of Shāh Abdul Latif that his poetry has remained a closed book to all but those acquainted with the Sindhī language. In Sind his poems are held in such universal and popular esteem as is accorded only to poetry which has successfully interpreted the most intimate thoughts and the sincerest feelings of a people. In some form or other the verses are known to all classes. They have still the advantage, lost in these practical days by all the poetry of the Western world, that they have not yet been divorced from their origin in spontaneous music and natural recitative.

The object of the present work is twofold, first to introduce English readers to the achievement of Shāh Abdul Latif, and second, to explain, by reference to the historical and social environment of the age in which the poems were composed, something of the message and meaning they convey. Except for a few scattered extracts no English translation of the *Risālo* has yet been attempted. The present work has occupied much of my leisure time for the last twelve years and has not been lightly undertaken. It has been partly carried out in the fascinating land of Sind itself.

I have translated not the complete *Risālo* but the abridgement known as the *Muntakhab* collected by Kāzī Ahmad Shāh. This abridgement is probably the best known and the most popular collection of Shāh Abdul Latif's verse. For permission to translate the *Muntakhab* I am indebted to the kindness of Messrs Pōkardās & Sons, the well-known publishers of Shikārpūr, Sind, who hold the copyright. They have done much to encourage and popularize the output of modern Sindhī literature. I am grateful to them for allowing me to use the text.

There are many formidable difficulties in translating poetry so abstruse as the *Risālo*. Not only are the poems written in a form of Sindhī that is no longer the current spoken and written language but syntax and vocabulary alike present many exceedingly hard puzzles for grammarians and scholars. Furthermore, the

expression is often a highly correct elliptical form of one of those of Pindar and Pærsæ, though two well-known words are used by both authors. The thought is often expressed in a way which the deep subtleties of Sûfi philosophy. The many words and phrases which are employed are hard to explain, and it is only by a patient study of the underlying meaning of the very different cultural forms of Western Europe. I do not pretend that my work is free from error. Indeed in many places I am doubtful of the meaning which the poet wished to convey. I have, however, taken the greatest care to ensure that the translation, while remaining close enough to the text to satisfy scholars, shall be a literary and not a literal translation, so as to be capable of being read for its own sake without reference to the Sindhi original.

In Part II of this work the meaning of much that may seem obscure in the translation will, I hope, be clarified. The subjects discussed in Part II ought, in conjunction with the historical account of the Moghul and the Kâlhôro age in Sind which forms Part I, to prove useful to all who may at some future time wish to improve upon my work. I have gratefully to acknowledge the permission granted me by the Government of Bombay to examine the wealth of historical material in the Bombay Record Office. I have used many extracts from the Government records in Part I and I believe that this is the first occasion on which most of the extracts relating to the East India Company's Factory in Sind in the eighteenth century have been published. For the benefit of students interested in the subject matter of this book I have compiled select bibliographies of the more important works which I have consulted or to which I have referred. I have also found much assistance in the excellent library of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

It remains for me only to add that writing this book has been a labour of love. I dedicate it gratefully to the people of Sind from whom, during the years I lived amongst them, I have experienced nothing but kindness and consideration. If my work helps scholars outside Sind to obtain some idea of the true thought and feeling of the people who dwell in the Lower Indus valley I shall believe myself more than handsomely repaid for all my labour.

Hæc olim meminisse iuvabit

H. T. SORLEY

Bombay

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 History of the Western Jumna Canals', by Lieut Yule (*J A S B*,
 Vol XV, 1846, pp 213 *et seq*)
 'The Mihrān of Sind and its Tributaries a Geographical and Historical
 Study', by Major H G Raverty (*J A S B*, Vol LXI, Pt I, 1892,
 pp 155 *et seq*)

THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY, LONDON

'Emotional Religion in Islām as affected by Music and Singing' Trans-
 lated by D B Macdonald (published in *J R A S*, 1901, pp 195
et seq)

PRONUNCIATION OF VOWEL SOUNDS IN SINDHI PERSIAN AND ARABIC WORDS

a as in 'China	o as in 'ow
ʔ as in 'father	u as in 'put
ē like ay in 'may	ō like oo in 'food
i as in 'pit	u nas̄d as in French 'bon
ī like ee in 'meet	

ABBREVIATIONS

- S I L B* —*Secretariat Inward Letter Book*
E I I —*English Factories in India*
P D D —*Public Department Diary*
S P D —*Secret and Political Department*
J R A S —*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*

BOOK I

HISTORY

' Time like an ever rolling stream,
 Bears all its sons away
They fly forgotten as a dream
 Dies at the opening day

ISAAC WATTS

' The days have vanished, tone and tint,
 And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
 Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint

We pass the path that each man trod
 Is dim and will be dim with weeds
 What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age ' '

TELLYSON—' In Memoriam '

CHAPTER I

SIND 1690-1760, THE TWILIGHT OF THE MOGHULS

I *The character of the period 1690-1760, with reference to conditions in Sind*

THE decline of the Moghul Empire in India was a leisurely process. But signs of the *débâcle* to come were obvious to discriminating observers long before the occurrence of the spectacular events which figure prominently in the history books. It is unfortunate that the Moghul Empire has not been served by historians so efficiently as the Roman Empire was. No Gibbon has yet written the connected story of the political power which, started by the energy and downrightness of the invading Bābur in the earlier part of the sixteenth century, came to its virtual and inglorious end in the imbecilities of the Imperial Court in the days of Clive. Nowhere is the need for an adequate description of the Moghul power in its decline felt more than in the case of Sind. There the growing ineffectiveness of the suzerainty of Delhi produced local events which shaped the destiny of the province in a manner definitely individual. To throw some light on the nature of these local events will be part of the purpose of this book. The task is one of great difficulty owing to the extreme paucity, indeed the almost total absence, of reliable contemporary record of any description whatsoever for the actual years of the period 1690-1760. This period, covering seventy years, commences from the last decade of the seventeenth century and ends about the time of the great disruption of authority in India, when the second battle of Pānīpat had broken the hope of the Marātha confederacy as a permanent power in India, when Clive had won the battle of Plassey and British dominion over the entire continent was in the opinion of most contemporaries being unwittingly but none the less surely established.¹ Thus a period which begins with the sleeping paralysis

¹ It is not true, however, to say that full territorial dominion over India was never before the eyes of the East India Company as a definite policy. In 1688 at the instance of Sir John Child was passed the resolution which stated 'the determination of the Company to guard their commercial supremacy on the basis of their territorial sovereignty' and foreshadowed the annexations of the next century. Ilbert *Government of India*, p. 24. 'The increase of our revenue' it runs, 'is the subject of our care as much as our trade 'tis that must maintain our force when twenty accidents may interrupt our trade 'tis that must make us a nation in India' Ibidem, p. 27. The object, in the words of the Directors, was to 'lay the foundations of a large well-grounded sure English dominion in India for all time to come. See Marriott *The English in India*, pp. 63-4.

of Moghul power in the latter days of Aurangzēb. The two events in an orgy of turbulence in the midst of which the foundations of modern India were laid with a strong high caste Hindu.

By the end of the seventeenth century it was plain that Aurangzēb the great, austere and obstinate conqueror whose powerful hand had succeeded in stretching the Moghul dominion had not many more years to live. It was tribute to the strength of determination and the ability of the man of remarkable genius that he overcame all his difficulties and preserved the unity of the crumbling Delhi empire. It is however the characteristic weakness of Oriental autocracies that they fail to provide any adequate means for ensuring a peaceful succession of rulers. When the ruling autocrat dies there is at once a conflict amongst rival claimants for power and this inevitably results in civil dissension, revolution and war to be suppressed only by a man strong enough to overcome all opposition. By the time Aurangzēb was nearing his deathbed signs were not wanting that upheaval and violent change were inevitable. The world had altered greatly from the days of Akbar's glory and Shāh Jahān's magnificence. The transition to modern times had indeed already made itself clear in many ways. India was no longer likely to remain a closed continent. The development of trade between the various countries of the world was taking a form that is familiar to present-day people. Sea power had become a driving force such as the world had never previously known on this scale. It was no longer possible for an autocrat at the head of a dying feudal system to control an over-centralized political machine which worked very creakily in the vast areas remote from Delhi. The days of the semi-feudal levy inadequately provided with artillery and but imperfectly disciplined were in fact numbered. Methods that had succeeded in a simpler and less intricate age were now completely out of date. Some capable historians have held that the fall of the Moghul Empire was due to the want of a competent succession of autocrats to follow in the footsteps of Aurangzēb, able to do what he did, to the corruption of the Court at Delhi and to the futility of the ruling class of feudal chiefs and governors. This view can be demonstrated to be completely mistaken. The Moghul Empire declined and fell because it was no longer fit to perform its task of keeping order and ensuring the kind of local government which the circumstances of the day were demanding. The reasons of the fall were the inherent military weakness of the Empire which had neither military nor naval power fit to deal with the dangers which threatened its disruption, and its utter incompetence to provide for the growing needs of a better local government. Better local

government was essential for dealing with the rising importance of many localities of India consequent on the narrowing of the world brought about by better sea communications, more effective finance and the rivalry of those countries which sought to draw India into the economic unity of the eighteenth century world. To a problem of this kind the Moghul Empire was completely unable to provide any satisfactory solution. The pride of Akbar and the splendour of Shāh Jahān had prevailed only because neither Akbar nor Shāh Jahān had been faced with the difficulties which, setting in about the commencement of Aurangzēb's reign, became more and more insistent as the seventeenth century drew to a close. In the end these difficulties became so compelling that no political authority of the kind which the Moghul Empire offered could possibly have met them successfully. In 1746, eleven years before the battle of Plassey, a shrewd European adventurer who had lived in India for twenty years foresaw clearly the coming end. Colonel James Mill in that year said, 'The whole country of Hindustān or the empire of the Great Moghul is and ever has been in a state so feeble and defenceless that it is almost a miracle that no prince of Europe with a maritime power at command has as yet thought of making such acquisitions there as at one stroke would put him and his subjects in possession of infinite wealth. The policy of the Moghul is bad, his military worse and as to a maritime power to command and protect his coasts he has none at all. The province of Bengal though not to be reduced by the power of the Moghul is equally indefensible with the rest of Hindustān on the side of the ocean and consequently may be forced out of the rebels' hand with all its wealth which is incredibly vast'. This sagacious prediction was completely fulfilled within twenty years on the battlefields of Plassey, Pānīpat, Wandīwash and Buxar. In fact the Moghul Empire fell for two predominant reasons neither of which had any connexion with the competence or incompetence of the occupant of the throne of Delhi or the lack of quality in the feudal aristocracy. These two reasons may be stated simply as the military defencelessness of the Empire and its inability owing to over-centralization to control the keen new world that was stirring to life everywhere with the development of world trade and commerce. The futility of the feudal aristocracy was the natural result of years of abused power and self-indulgence suffered to continue because there had been no power able and willing to stop it.¹ It is not surprising, therefore,

¹ 'Their' (i.e. the East India Company's) 'earliest victories were over troops that were no better than a rabble of hired soldiers without coherence or loyalty. An Indian army of that period was usually an agglomeration of mercenaries collected by captains of companies who supplied men able to pay for them having enlisted them at random out of the swarm of moving

flood The Indian people were becoming a masterless multitude swaying to and fro in the political storm and clinging to any power, natural or supernatural, that seemed likely to protect them¹ This was a sad ending to the pageant of power and glory displayed in the Āin-i-Akbarī, to the opulence of Jahāngīr's court, to the royal magnificence of Shāh Jahān, the builder of the world's finest gem of ornate and artistic architecture, and to the unbending vigilance of the tyrannical and ascetic Aurangzēb

Such are the main features of the period with which in this work I am chiefly concerned The decline of Moghul power is only incidental to my purpose, which is to trace how Sind fared during this time of rapid and far-reaching change, and to reconstruct, so far as the available evidence will allow, the social life of Sind during those vanished days Scanty and inadequate though the contemporary historical material be, it is not easily intelligible unless the greater happenings outside Sind are seen in true proportion Sind was added to the Moghul Empire by Akbar in 1592 It remained an integral part of the Empire till the disastrous advent of Nādir Shāh in 1737 when it fell first under Persian and then in 1747 under Afghan dominance In the thirty odd years between the death of Aurangzēb and the invasion of Nādir Shāh, Sind presents the spectacle of the growing weakness of the Moghul authority, of a weakness manifesting itself in the increasing independence of the predominant local dynasty of the Kalhōra, which followed the typical oriental plan of seizing what it could and holding what it seized in the belief that Delhi was too far away to matter Thus the Moghul governors appointed from Hindustān gave place to Sindhi governors bowing the knee as little as they dared to Moghul, Persian and Afghān in turn By 1760 the ruling dynasty of the Kalhōra was almost in fact but not at all in theory independent The success with which the Kalhōra strengthened their authority and enhanced their importance is no great tribute to them It was the inevitable result of the increasing helplessness or imbecility of the holders of the Delhi throne The Sindhi governors thus precariously became rulers themselves but they were always ready to retreat at any sign of serious assault and were forced to pay varying amounts of tribute to their suzerains from time to time The Kalhōra in their turn fell for the same reason that the Moghul Empire itself fell—weakness in the field before a superior military power But even the Tālpūrs who succeeded them, as the Mayors of the Palace succeeded the Merovingians, were never in fact completely independent of their Afghān overlords till the first decade of the nineteenth century The combined efforts of the

¹ Lyall *History of India*, VIII, p 78

that as soon as the empire of the Moghul was attacked in its Achilles heel it collapsed as thoroughly as a heap of cards 'On Friday, the 24th of March 1707', says Lane-Poole, 'in the fiftieth year of his reign and the eighty-ninth of his life after performing the morning prayers and repeating the creed the Emperor Aurangzēb gave up the ghost In accordance with his command, 'Carry this creature of dust to the nearest burial place and lay him in the earth with no useless coffin' he was buried in all simplicity near Daulatābād beside the tombs of Muslim saints' The death was a portent and his passing closed an age. Half a century after this sad, grim and lonely doctrinaire's death the Moghul Empire was in ruins and the Indian continent in a welter of unsettlement and commotion As Sarkar has said, 'The dry rot in the heart of the Moghul state manifested itself publicly when Bāji Rao's cavalry insulted the imperial capital in 1737 and his example invited Nādir Shāh's invasion and the utter collapse of the Government of Delhi in 1739' In vivid language Sir Alfred Lyall has painted an unforgettable picture of the condition of India at this period 'Nādir Shāh', he has written, 'added one more massacre to the blood-stained annals of that ill-fated city, wrenched away from the imperial crown all its possessions west of the Indus and departed home leaving the Moghul Empire which had received its death blow in a state of mortal collapse The barriers having thus been broken down Ahmad Shāh of the Abdallī tribe of Afghans followed two years later When Nādir Shāh had been assassinated by the Persians in his camp in Khorasān Ahmad Shāh who commanded a large body of cavalry in Nādir Shāh's army rode off eastward to capture Afghānistān and from that base he seized the whole of the Punjāb between 1728 and 1751 Meanwhile the Marāthas were spreading over Central India from the south-west like a devastating

free-lances and swordsmen, chiefly Asiatic foreigners by whom all India was infested These bands had no better stomach for fighting than the condottieri of Italy in the sixteenth century the close fire of the European musketry was more than they had bargained for and artillery properly served they could not face at all Sir Alfred Lyall *History of India* Vol VIII p 170

It is on record that any number of foot-soldiers might be enlisted although they deserted in shoals when a distant march was in prospect and that the best cavalry of Hindustān (Afghans Tartars Persians or Marāthas) might be had in abundance at six weeks notice many of them as the East India records state, out of the very camp of the enemy *ibidem* p 172

* S Lane-Poole *Aurangzēb* p 204

Amongst the last words that this sad austere man wrote were 'My years have gone by profitless God has been in my heart yet my darkened eyes have not recognized the Light hope is transient and the best moment never comes back Nothing brought I into this world but I carry away with me the burden of my sins' S Lane-Poole *India under the Maratta Rule* p 408

flood The Indian people were becoming a masterless multitude swaying to and fro in the political storm and clinging to any power, natural or supernatural, that seemed likely to protect them¹ This was a sad ending to the pageant of power and glory displayed in the Āin-i-Akbarī, to the opulence of Jahāngīr's court, to the royal magnificence of Shāh Jahān, the builder of the world's finest gem of ornate and artistic architecture, and to the unbending vigilance of the tyrannical and ascetic Aurangzēb

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¹ Lyall *History of India*, VIII, p 78

Kalhōra and Tālpūrs together for one hundred years did, however, succeed in establishing in Sind a petty Muslim state which preserved, up till the time of the British conquest in 1843, the characteristic features of Moghul administration and added to that a peculiar brand of Islāmic quasi-theocracy, a kind of political power determined to retain its individuality as far as it could and uphold a policy of splendid isolation. By the time of Sir Charles Napier this isolation refused to blend harmoniously with the general trend of Indian polity in the mid-nineteenth century. Thus Sind exhibits in a way peculiar to itself the deterioration of the Moghul administrative machine, with life prolonged artificially by the circumstances of the semi-independence that grew with the decline of the Moghul power. Neither the Kalhōra nor the Tālpūrs did much to alter the political and social system which they found. It is for this reason that the battles of Miāni and Duābo in 1843 brought under British dominion an oriental state run largely on the broad lines of the Moghul Empire, albeit weakened and debilitated from the standard of its best days. While, therefore, the absence of reliable contemporary record for the period 1690-1760 in Sind makes direct evidence of the social conditions in which the people lived impossible, there is little reason to doubt that the peoples of Sind in the first half of the eighteenth century lived more or less in the way in which Sir Charles Napier found them living in 1843. There is ample record of the social conditions in Sind at the time of the British conquest and for ten years before that. There is also copious information on social and political conditions in Sind for about thirty years ending 1662, when the Moghul Empire was at its strongest. It is thus possible by means of reasoned deduction and critical judgement to complete the gap that lies between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century. To do this is the object of this book in order that we, the creatures of another day inspired by different ideals, may understand in some measure the countryside in which was composed the beautiful mystical poetry of Shāh Abdul Latif of Bhit—the only classic work in the Sindhu language—and may learn what sort of beings were the people for whom these songs were written and by whom they were sung.

II *Sind and some characteristic features of its history*

Sind is difficult country for the historian. The reason why this should be so is plain enough. Despite the fact that Sind is an area where an advanced civilization found early lodgement in India the terrain is, except for certain scattered periods, woefully devoid of informative historical monuments, inscriptions and all those physical aids which enable archaeology to supply the blanks of a

written record¹ Few buildings exist in sufficient preservation to display the civilization of any century previous to the fifteenth and, with rare exceptions, the buildings that are now accounted old are generally not earlier than the seventeenth century and most are even later in date There are no relics of old seats of learning, no old libraries and no collections of ancient² documents The men of learning who in earlier centuries lived in Sind have disappeared, leaving behind them only trifling remains for the use of modern scholarship The absence of architecture is capable³ of easy explanation The land is an alluvial tract over which throughout the centuries the Indus has wandered in a multitude of shifting channels The buildings were constructed mostly of mud, sticks or wattles, just as they are outside all the large towns today Even the buildings of burnt brick (and these are nearly all mosques and tombs) have suffered from the assault of the river, the salinity of the soil and the rigour of a climate which for six months in the year is as hot as anything to be found in India and is cursed with dust storms that carry grit into every interstice which a violent wind can penetrate The large towns⁴ of today, Karāchi, Hyderābād, Sukkur and Shikārpūr, are recent growths of the modern age of the eighteenth century The early towns have either disappeared or still exist merely as collections, ancient and medieval, of mud-built houses erected on the sites of older mud-built houses that have tumbled down so that the oldest inhabited sites have gradually risen on mounds of debris devoid of permanent relics, except broken pottery of no archaeological value A shifting alluvial plain liable to inundation, surrounded on every side but that of the sea by forbidding desert or barren hilly country, is no place in which to look for a Kutab Minār, a Vijāyanagar or a temple of Madūra Thus the historian of Sind is handicapped from the start, and one of the most reliable keys that unlock the doors of the past is broken and useless He must use other and more subjective means to unfold the dead pages of days that are gone

¹ The ruins of Mōhanjōdarō and Chanhūdārō, the dead sites of Ālōr and Brahmanābād, an occasional stupa, the ruckle of decay that is Tatta are no substitute for the aged buildings extant in numbers in most other parts of India

² Burton *History of Sindh* Note 16 to Chapter I, p 377

³ Goldsmid *Historical Memoir on Shikārpūr*, p 5 Bombay Govt Records, New Series, No XVII

⁴ Both Hyderābād and Karāchi date from the second half of the eighteenth century Shikārpūr, founded by the Dāūd-pōtras in 1616, did not attain any size till the later decades of the eighteenth century when the Shikārpūrī Hindu merchants began to ply a successful trade through Afghānistān with Central Asia Sukkur as it now exists is a very modern place Prior to the nineteenth century it was a small riverside village in no way so important as its neighbour on the opposite bank, Rōhrī, which it has managed to outgrow to almost four times the size

Looking down the centuries the observer will notice certain peculiarities of Sind's history. For the most part Sind has remained apart from the really crucial events happening in the rest of neighbouring Asia. Some of the more important of these have affected Sind deeply but in most cases the repercussions have been slight. This aloofness in the story of Sind and its peoples is best illustrated by comparing the life of Sind to a pool into which from time to time a pebble is thrown from outside. There are a few ripples after the splash and then all is still once more. Or to vary the metaphor, the restless tide of Indian history beats upon the barren reef of Sind's isolation and only a few mild waves break gently upon the sandy beach. It would not be incorrect to describe Sind's history as episodic, isolated, characteristic of the non-bellicose nature of the bulk of its population throughout time, and as showing to a late date the theocratic foundation of Islāmic society in a very marked way. These judgements can be briefly substantiated. Many episodes in Sind's history have had great historic interest, but have not in themselves had important effects outside the valley of the Lower Indus. The history books seize upon such incidents with avidity. Indeed in most histories of India references to Sind are usually confined to them. The incidents, however, have a picturesque interest of their own for colour and variety. The Mōhanjōdarō civilization, of doubtful age between 3250 and 2750 B.C., displays affinities not yet fully explained with the Sumerian and Elamite cultures—a culture that is chalcolithic and also urban, which may or may not have extended into the Ganges valley¹. At any rate traces of it have not been found yet anywhere except in Sind and one region of the Punjāb². In 325 B.C. Alexander the Great concluded his ambitious adventure into India by taking his army down the Indus. Tradition still attributes to certain places in Sind a memory of his passage. In A.D. 711 the young Arab conqueror Muhammad Bin Kāssim brought the invading armies of Islām to the plains of India, where in the Lower Indus valley Islām established an outpost of Muhammadanism that persisted, with more or less deeply penetrative effects in this part of Asia, till the epoch of the systematic Muslim invasion of India three hundred years later changed the whole history of India. In A.D. 1351 the Delhi Emperor Muhammad Bin Tughlāk on his return from Gujārāt and Kāthiawār, whither he had gone to put down rebellion, died of fever near Tatta in Lower Sind and in the picturesque words of Badāoni 'the king was freed from his people

¹ See Mackay *The Indus Civilization*, p. 7.

² The latest information however seems to show a few traces in the Ganges valley in isolated sites.

and they from their king'. In 1540 in the civil war between Humāyūn and Shīr Shāh, Humāyūn was driven from his kingdom and wandered as a fugitive. For a time he took refuge in Sind and in 1542 at Umarkōt a famous child was born, later to be Akbar the Great Moghul. Sind figures afterwards in the civil war between Dārā Shukōh and Aurangzēb who, himself a Governor of Multān during 1648-50, had resided in Sind for part of the time of his Governorship. In 1658 Dārā Shukōh was pursued by Aurangzēb's generals through Sind down the Indus from Bakhar to Tatta, but managed successfully to run the gauntlet of the Imperial army and fort at Sehwan in a skilful river-war, only to be pursued back out of Gujārāt, captured at last on the borders of Sind, and sacrificed to the ambition of his younger brother. The siege of Bakhar, at which Manucci served as an artilleryman, is one of the most vivid episodes in the memoirs of that versatile Italian adventurer. No event of prime importance graced the annals of Sind between 1659 and 1758, when the East India Company established its second, short-lived factory on the Indus delta. In 1843 Sind provided the East India Company with one of its last conquests in India. By that time the position which Sind occupied territorially had made it an important factor in the complicated political game in which Afghānistān, the Sikhs and the Company were deeply engaged, and Sind suffered the penalty of annexation for what the British government of the day considered the intransigence of the ruling house of Tālpūr. These picturesque events apart, the history of Sind has been strangely monotonous, self-contained and of little interest to the outside world. The most characteristic feature is in fact its isolation. It has had a full and vivid life of its own, as this book will disclose, for one period of the eighteenth century, but this life has had few contacts with any but the country's nearest neighbours. To explain the isolation presents no difficulty. There are two main reasons for it, first, the nature of the country with its fortresses of desert and barren land on all sides and its climate which confines active campaigning to a period of a few months annually, and second, the comparative unattractiveness of a river valley, capable of yielding crops of wonderful fertility but subject to the caprice of an incalculable river that did enormous damage by flooding before irrigation works had reached their present stage of sure efficiency. Thus the wandering hordes which poured over the frontier barriers of the north-west, until these were for ever closed by the growth of the kingdom of Afghānistān in the mid-eighteenth century and the rise of the Sikhs, passed rapidly to the more promising fields of the Punjāb rivers and the Gangetic plain in their assaults on the peninsular land of Hindustān. In all the

long chronicle of fighting and war which is Indian history from 1000 A.D. onwards Sind receives hardly any mention. Sind had its own trouble with short-lived dynasties, civil wars and the depredations of the hill hordes from Balūchistān. But such was Sind's own domestic trial. It was not till the end of Akbar's reign that the Moghul thought Sind worth adding to his empire. This he accomplished in 1592. But even as a part of the Moghul Empire Sind continued to play an isolated part of such small distinction that Moreland¹ has found it impossible from the available historical record to include Sind in his economic reconstruction of the Moghul Empire.

The peoples of Sind, whether indigenous or immigrant, have never shown any military genius. The land has produced no conquerors whose name is handed down in the pages of history. The people as a whole have always been peaceful and industrious, fully occupied in the local affairs of the Lower Indus valley and tilling with skill such land as the vagaries of the great river made capable of yielding crops in the days of haphazard and careless irrigation. Finally, since the time of the Sūmra in the thirteenth century and onwards, the land has been predominantly Muslim in population and the government had a strong theocratic basis with much virtual power in the hands of the priestly class of Sayids. When Moghul control weakened in the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Kalhōra, a local dynasty that claimed descent from a holy mendicant, became all but independent rulers. Though the Tālpūrs, who succeeded the Kalhōra, boasted no such ancestry and traditions but were plain blunt shepherds who proved capable men of action and relied on the power of their Balūchī clans to maintain order, they were just as determined as the Kalhōra had been to preserve the isolation of the land and safeguard the continuance of a petty Muslim state whose administration was based partly on the theory of the Korān and partly on the system which the Moghuls had perfected. Thus through all these influences Sind has preserved an individuality and a separateness which are rare in India, so that when at last 'the changeable, puerile and divided chieftains' as Outram² calls the Mīrs of 1843, played into the hands of Lord Ellenborough, the British entered on Sind as if it were almost an unknown land. So much is this the case that a flood of literature dealing with this period poured forth for the enlightenment of the British public. It is this literature, together with the records of the East India Company's short-lived factories in Sind in the

¹ Moreland *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, pp 322-3 Appendix C Mogul Revenue Statistics

² Goldsmid *Life of Outram*, Vol I, p 331

seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, which forms the chief evidence of the nature of the land, its government and the social life of its people during the period 1690-1760 with which this book is chiefly concerned

III *The historical sources and their inadequacy*

The historical sources on which reliance must be placed for a reconstruction of the period 1690-1760 fall into five classes first, there are the works of the native historians dealing especially with Sind second, there are the works of the native writers dealing with the Moghul Empire or aspects of it during this period or previous to this period but containing few references to Sind in detail third, there are the records of the East India Company during two stages of its career when it maintained a factory in Sind (a) 1635-62, (b) 1758-75 fourth, there are the accounts given by European travellers who visited Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries fifth, there is the evidence provided by the British occupation of Sind, consisting of a vast mass of papers, administrative and private, dealing with most aspects of the state of the country immediately prior to and immediately subsequent to the date of annexation Of secondary authorities the number of reliable books dealing with social life in the days of Akbar, Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān, Aurangzēb and his successors is immense but there are few which make more than brief and superficial reference to the Sind of the period with which I am concerned here

What is the value of these various classes of historical material? The native historians dealing especially with Sind are of little help for the times of Shāh Abdul Latīf, which cover the period 1690-1760 One reason for their inadequacy is fortuitous, that, with one exception, they do not describe the particular period with which I am concerned, but, with this one exception, are all devoted to the recounting of events that did not extend beyond the reign of Jahāngīr There are five important native histories of Sind, the Tārīkh-i-Masūmī, the Tārīkh-i-Tāhūrī, the Bēqlarnāma, the Tarkhān-nāma and the Tuhfat-al-Kirām These books are all written in Persian, which was the Court language of the ruling houses of the country up to the days of the British conquest The Tārīkh-i-Sind was written by Mīr Muhammad Masūm of Bakhar and is the most copious account of Sind history But it does not go beyond the defeat of the then ruling house of Sind by Akbar in 1592 and the capitulation of Mīrza Jānī Bēg of Tatta Muhammad Masūm was the son of Sarfrāzī Hussainī of Kermān and was born at Bakhar He belonged to a priestly Sayid family He wrote his history of Sind in 1600 for the improvement of his son's

mind and has filled his story with reputed miracles of saints and holy men to such an extent as greatly to depreciate the value of his work for scientific historians. The *Tārīkh-i-Tāhūrī* was the work of Mīr Tāhūr Muhammad Nasyānī, son of Sayīd Hassan of Tatta. The author and his family for two generations before him were dependants of the ruling house of Arghūn and Tarkhān, the dynasty from whom Sind was wrested by Akbar and added to the Moghul dominion. The *Tārīkh-i-Tāhūrī* was completed in 1621 (1030 A.H.) and takes the reader down to 1621 to the death of Mirza Ghāzī Bēg by poisoning at Kandahār. The book has occasional passages of considerable historical interest and is written in a picturesque and attractive style very uncommon in chronicles of this kind. The *Bēqlarnāma* is the work of Amīr Sayīd Kāsum Bēqlar of a family from Tarmēz in Samarkand which had settled in Sind in the time of Shāh Hussain Arghūn and after settlement in Sind married into the Bhattī tribe of Sindhis. The book was finished probably about A.D. 1628 and is historically of little value. Its chief interest is in the minor affairs of the Tarkhān house with particular attention to the marauding expeditions of Warsī Rāna of Umārkōt into whose family the author had married. The *Tarkhān-nāma* was written by Sayīd Jamāl, son of Mīr Jalāluddīn Husainī Shirāzī. It is indebted considerably to the *Tārīkh-i-Sind* and the *Tārīkh-i-Tāhūrī* and is devoted mostly to the praise of Mirza Muhammad Sāleh Tarkhān who paid obeisance to the reigning Moghul Emperor and was rewarded with various preferments, including first the Subedārī of Tatta and later the Subedārī of Gujārāt, for his helpfulness to the Moghul Emperor. The work was written in 1654-5 and is of little historical value. The *Tuhfat-al-Kirām* is the most pretentious historical work by an inhabitant of Sind. It purports to be a general history down to the author's own time in three books, and the third book deals especially with Sind. The author is Sayīd Alī Shēr Kanīa of Tatta. There is considerable historical material in the *Tuhfat-al-Kirām* but it is so jumbled up with items of uncritical credulity and stories of saints, miracle workers and holy men that its total value is small. The work carries the history of Sind down to the death of Mīan Sarfrāz Kalhōro and appears to have been finished about A.D. 1773. This historical work does therefore cover the period with which I am dealing and had it been written on sound historical principles would have been invaluable. But it is typical of its class and suffers from all the usual defects of oriental chronicles.

Of the second class of native histories, those relating to the Moghul Empire in general or in particular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries only, the *Āin-i-Akbarī*, which is dated a century

previous to the period I wish to describe, is of much value. Other works, which are numerous, make little or no reference to Sind because of that characteristic of isolation already explained. This type of work is useful merely for throwing light on conditions in the Moghul Empire between the days of Jahāngīr and its decline in the mid-eighteenth century. Most of the materials are available in certain excellent secondary authorities, such as Moreland's *India at the Death of Akbar* and *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, Sarkar's careful studies of the later Moghul period, Irvine's monographs on various aspects of later Moghul administration, Vincent Smith's *Akbar the Great Moghul*, Lane-Poole's *Aurangzēb*, and Farūki's work on the reign of Aurangzēb. The bibliography in this last book gives some idea of the authorities most valuable for a study of Sind between 1600 and 1750 in the form either of contemporary historical works or of modern secondary authorities based upon them. Much useful information on medieval Sind is found in the writings of the earlier Arabic and Persian historians and chroniclers, some mention of whom is made in the bibliography attached to this volume.

Before leaving the subject of the native historians some remark upon their deficiencies is necessary. No one is better qualified to make this remark than Sir H. M. Elliot whose monumental work on the *History of India as told by its own Historians* is indispensable. Elliot has remarked on this type of writing in general 'of domestic history we have in our Indian annalists absolutely nothing, and the same may be remarked of nearly all Muhammadan historians except Ibn Khaldūn. By them society is never contemplated, either in its conventional usages or recognized privileges, its constituent elements or mutual relations, in its established classes or popular institutions, in its private recesses or habitual intercourses. In notices of commerce, agriculture, internal police and local judicature they are equally deficient. A fact, an anecdote, a speech, a remark which will illustrate the condition of the common people or of any rank subordinate to the highest is considered too insignificant to be suffered to intrude upon a relation which concerns only grandees and ministers, thrones and imperial powers'.¹ Most of the native annalists wrote as Court flatterers, or chroniclers of the achievements of some ruling house. They are not interested in the lives of the poor, the mean and the downtrodden. They did not speculate on or describe the economic structure of the feudal society in which they lived and which they did not in fact understand. This defect is true of all histories written before modern scientific research became a serious subject of study dependent on the correlation of all aspects of a people's culture and their state of civilization. The

¹ Elliot. Original Preface, pp. vii-viii.

SHĀH ABDUL LATIF OF BHIT

defects are particularly evident in the native historians of medieval and Moghul India whose success depended largely on the favour of an autocrat usually intolerant of anything that displayed his arrogance, his stupidity, or his lack of interest in what did not reflect his own self-importance. The study of social history is in fact a very modern development which was possible only when the attention of serious-minded writers was deflected from the narrow field of the classical writers of antiquity and when the importance of economic factors in the development of mankind's mission was at last realized. Such a form of study depends upon an examination of all forms of evidence, in which the temporary triumphs of a potentate or military adventurer play a very minor part. Even eighteenth century England, where intellectual curiosity was directed on numberless subjects of recondite and uncommon character, shows the same tendency to neglect the details of economic and domestic history. The point has been very well put in the preface to *Johnson's England*¹. Therein it is remarked 'To present at all a living picture of the life of a past age in all its varied aspects is always a difficult task. What is known as social history, nowadays generally found more attractive than political history, but it is a fallacy to suppose that it is easier. People commonly find the politics of their own day extremely interesting and therefore relate them fully and comment upon them lavishly, however dull they may appear to be to a later generation while upon the other hand the details of their everyday existence which pique the curiosity seem to them too trivial and are too much taken for granted to be recorded'. It is for this reason that the labours of such important social historians as Vincent Smith, Lane-Poole, Moreland and Sarkar are so invaluable for an understanding of the social condition of India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Though none of these writers makes more than passing reference to the Sind of the period 1690-1760, the domestic and social history of Sind in those days would be nearly unintelligible without their thoroughly efficient and painstaking correlation of all the writings of these historians have been based is itself an invaluable complement to their own writings. The native historians and annalists taken as a whole must therefore be classed as thoroughly inadequate and unsatisfactory, and without the supplementing which is possible from outside evidence they would be of very little value for the purpose of this book.

When, however, we consider this other outside evidence we find ourselves at once on firmer ground and in a world which unwillingly

The East India Company maintained a factory in Sind from 1639 to 1692 and again from 1758 to 1775. The records of these two factories are invaluable direct evidence of the condition of the country at least to the extent to which traders of the type sent out by the Company were interested enough and able to describe it. Actually some of the official letters of the Company's servants to the head office in Surat and later in Bombay present a most vivid picture of the events of the time. The evidence is partly in the Bombay Record Office and partly in the library of the India Office. To the latter the careful research of Sir William Foster has provided an admirable guide for the seventeenth century factory. There are many blanks in the Bombay Government records, but enough material has been preserved to enable the historian to form a consistent plan. The records in the Bombay Record Office for the eighteenth century factory are more complete and are indispensable for a full understanding of the troubled condition in Sind when the Moghul Empire was breaking up, when the Kalhōra were struggling towards independence, and the Sikhs, the Pathāns and the Marāthas were all political rivals for a share in the power that could be filched from the Delhi Empire. It is, however, exceedingly unfortunate that the period covered by the life of Shāh Abdul Latīf (1689-1752) is totally devoid of any reference to Sind in the East India Company's records. The position is that there is evidence of the generation before the poet's birth, and there is evidence of the events that

happened within a decade after his death, but I have been able to trace in the Bombay Record Office only one reference¹ to any event in Sind occurring during the life of the poet and that event is a trivial one

Exactly the same blanks in the record are characteristic of the evidence of European travellers. The number of European travellers who visited India up to the end of the seventeenth century was very large, though most of them were confined to certain periods. The forties, fifties and sixties of the seventeenth century were particularly rich in foreign travellers who have left a record of their impressions behind. Again towards the end of the same century many Europeans came to India and left their impressions of the working of the factories they saw and the social and economic condition of the Indian peoples. Sind has of course shared only to a small extent in this wealth of reminiscence, but it was not entirely neglected. Though Bernier, Tavernier and Thévenot did not visit Sind and have next to nothing to say about it, there were Nicholas Withington, the victim of a strange misadventure in 1616, Father Manrique in 1640, Niccolao Manucci who served as an artilleryman at the siege of Bakhar in 1655, and Captain Alexander Hamilton in 1699, all of whom have left behind them unforgettable pictures of this *terra incognita*. The last of these four is the only one who has recorded his impressions of Sind during the period of Shāh Abdul Latīf's lifetime. The record of conditions generally in the Moghul Empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is, however, so full, and the evidence we possess of the form of the Empire as witnessed in Sind during select portions of the seventeenth and select portions of the eighteenth centuries is so voluminous that there is no insuperable difficulty in filling the blanks which exist between 1699 and 1758, when historical material became copious.

With the British annexation of Sind in 1843 there became available a vast mass of historical material of every sort concerned with the social condition of the country as found at the time of the British conquest. But even prior to this, Sind had attracted some attention from officials and travellers of various kinds. In 1799 a Mr Nathan Crowe wrote a valuable account of the history of the Kalhōra after personal experience of the country. In 1809 a British mission led by Mr Hankey Smith visited Hyderābād and some four years later political officers like Colonel Pottinger and Lieutenant Del Hoste recorded invaluable impressions. In 1826 an American traveller named Masson told of an adventurous journey through Afghānistān, Balūchistān and Sind. In 1828 Dr Burnes visited the Court of the Amīrs and wrote a book which is full of the kind

¹ *SILB* No 4 of 1743-4, p 191

of facts posterity wishes to know In the thirties of the nineteenth century numerous observers wrote accounts of Sind, some of them specially valuable, like those of Postans and officers of the Royal Navy employed in surveying the Indus In the forties, owing to the war with Afghānistān, Sind became 'news' and was visited by hosts of travellers as a place to see The annexation brought still more To it we owe the magnificent works of Burton, full of minute information which only a man with his peculiar brand of curiosity and linguistic skill could have obtained

A careful collation of these varied sources enables the historian, despite the paucity of direct contemporary evidence, to draw a fairly reliable picture of social life in Sind during the first half of the eighteenth century Conclusions based on such collation need not be regarded as inadequate The reason is that while it is not true to say that conditions in Sind did not differ in 1730 from what they were in 1699 (for which direct evidence is available) nor again were exactly similar to conditions in 1758 (when direct evidence becomes available once more) it is not untrue to say that the nature of conditions prevailing between 1700 and 1758 can be readily inferred from the previous and later evidence Substantiation for this statement exists in the fact that the main administrative structure of the government remained largely unaltered from the days of Shāh Jahān to the days of Sir Charles Napier The economic foundation was not greatly changed despite the rise, towards the second half of the eighteenth century, of the four large towns of modern Sind, Karāchi, Hyderābād, Sukkur and Shikārpūr, which displaced Tatta, Nasarpūr, Rōhri, Sehwan, Kandiāro and a host of small places in the economic scheme, and despite the fact also that the social structure of the classes of society was made static in a manner possible only by the isolation of Sind from the rest of India and the clearly intelligible policy of both Kalhōra and Tālpūrs to maintain Sind as an individual Muslim state holding little converse with the rest of the world The internal construction of this Muslim state was plainly revealed by the British conquest Much of the bitter controversy which that event occasioned has led to an undue disparagement of the character of the native governments which preceded the British occupation It can be readily proved that many of the criticisms of Victorian writers are unjust and have their basis in an exaggerated form of the ethical, self-righteous superiority which characterized that part of the Victorian epoch and was particularly liable to obtrude itself when annexation was held to be justified on the grounds of its civilizing effects Actually the government of both Kalhōra and Tālpūrs carried on the system of the Moghuls adapted to more modern conditions and had a solid

justification in the conditions of the time and the ideas which actuated the majority of the population. This was a point of view which escaped the searching eyes of men like Sir Charles Napier and Burton, both of whom attached excessive importance to the stupidities, cruelties and crudities which the Kalhōra and the Tālpūrs had, for their own reasons, no particular desire to eradicate. Thus the Sind of Sir Charles Napier's day, which we can view with the precision of a microscope, was not very different in essentials from the Sind of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro, the prince who reigned about the end of the lifetime of Shāh Abdul Latīf, and the Sind of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro in its turn did not differ, except in the slight improvements of an unprogressive age passing on in years, from the Sind of Akbar, Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān and Aurangzēb. It will be the object of later chapters in this book to make this assertion good. The sources will be quoted for the judgements given, and the bibliography will enable students and scholars to verify for themselves the validity of the judgements.

IV *The first half of the eighteenth century in Sind, showing the passing of power from Moghul to Kalhōro*

For a proper understanding of the history of the Kalhōra it is necessary to make clear what exactly their relation is to the Moghul administration which, after half a century, they succeeded in displacing and how they in turn yielded their power to their successors the Tālpūrs. When Sind was conquered by Akbar in 1592 by the defeat of Mirza Jānī Bēg, a Tarkhān of the Central Asian tribe of Arghūns, Sind was in the ordinary course added to the domains of the Moghul Empire. It was provided with the administrative machinery employed elsewhere in the Moghul dominions. From the Āin-i-Akbarī we know the essential features of the system and also some of the details of its application to Sind. The extent to which Sind, after the Moghul annexation of it, was a unified area of government is not clearly known¹. But it seems unlikely that Sind was a compact unit completely under the control of its rulers. What is certain is that Upper and Lower Sind were never definitely united till a much later day. In fact even till the end of the Tālpūr rule in 1843 Sind may be held to have been very doubtfully unified. The peculiarity of the rule of the Amīrs was that the government was in the hands of three distinct persons who had separate areas of authority but managed somehow to conduct the administration without much quarrel amongst themselves—a feature of the Amīrs' rule which has always impressed

¹ See Ray *Dynastic History of Northern India, passim*

his tenure is an unusual and noteworthy achievement. The point is, however, that even as late as 1843 it can quite definitely be asserted with truth that unification between Upper and Lower Sind was not complete. When Sind was annexed to the Moghul dominions by Akbar the country as a whole was made part of the Sūbah of Multān and sarkārs were established in two places, Bākhār in the north and Tatta in the Indus deltaic region. These two sarkārs were under separate governors, and the extent of their actual authority is not clearly known. For a whole century the governors of Bākhār and Tatta were appointed first from the Tarkhān dynasty and later from Hindustān by the Moghul Emperor and were members of the feudal bureaucracy which controlled the administration. From the time of Shāh Jahān till the first decade of the eighteenth century the actual wielders of the Moghul's authority in Sind were officials sent from other parts of the Empire and might only by chance be occasionally natives of Sind. The importance of the Kalhōra is that from the time they became a powerful political force the system was changed and the representative of the Emperor was a native of Sind. The process was that the Kalhōra began as petty feudal chiefs, became strong enough to be appointed governors of sarkārs, and in the end succeeded in getting the control of both Upper and Lower Sind with headquarters at Bākhār and Tatta till, about the time of Nādir Shāh's invasion in 1737, they reached a position of virtual independence. The independence was virtual only because Delhi was too pre-occupied to be able to check petty aggrandizements so far away. In theory, however, the Kalhōra continued to be responsible to the Emperor. They were supposed to collect the revenue, remit what was necessary to Delhi, and maintain law and order. But even as late as the final establishment about 1760 of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōra as Prince of Sind (as he is called in the East India Company's letters) there were elements ready to resist a unification of power. This is evident in the reference, in the East India Company's records, to the Kalhōra's struggles against a Jām in Lower Sind, doubtless a Sammo of the Sindhi tribe of Samma who had been rulers of Lower Sind previous to the entry of the Central Asian dynasties finally defeated by Akbar in 1592.

The policy of the Moghuls had always been to make the utmost convenient use of existing institutions and employ the local feudal chiefs as minor dignitaries with a certain amount of their personal authority retained. This was in fact the only way in which a feudal society ill provided with a competent and disciplined standing army could hope to maintain itself and preserve order in distant parts. The system is sound in itself granted certain conditions, of

which the chief are the obedience of the local chiefs to the imperial governors and the due collection of the imperial revenue. Order had of course to be maintained to assure the latter and the Moghul practice was to allow a great deal of freedom in minor and local affairs provided these two great ends were served. It was the weakness of the system that it provided no real check on illicit exactions by petty chiefs and by governors up to that limit of excess which could not be overstepped.¹ The result of the weakness was a continual conflict between the revenue demands of local and imperial interests. The history of the Moghul occupation of Sind is full of examples of conflict of this kind. It was particularly the exactions of the local authorities which troubled the English traders who had come to Sind for commercial purposes only. The East India Company's records present a very complete picture of this inherent clash of interest usually resulting in the oppression of individuals, arbitrary acts of despotism, financial instability and administrative unsettlement of more or less serious import.

Vincent Smith has described this weakness of the Moghul administration very adequately. 'The whole framework of the government', he says, 'was military. The only considerable officials who did not take rank as army officers were charged with purely ecclesiastical and civil legal duties, such as the Sadars and the Kāzīs. Each of the more considerable Mansabdārs was vested as such with civil administrative powers practically unlimited. A local governor was not bound by any rules of either substantive law or procedure unless in so far as his conscience required him to follow the Korānic precepts. He was the representative of the imperial autocrat and as such could do as he pleased within his jurisdiction subject to the risk of being recalled to court and punished if complaints reached the ears of his sovereign.'² He states further 'The Government in short was carried on by a vast multitude of petty local despotisms kept in order to a certain extent by an overpowering autocracy at the top.' 'The whole administration', he adds, 'was absolutely personal and despotic, directed to the stringent collection of a heavy assessment, the provision of numerous military forces and the maintenance of imperfect public order in a rough and ready fashion under the sanction of ferocious punishments

¹ To my mind the correct inference is that in levies of all kinds whether imposed on classes or individuals officials had to avoid such a scandal as might provoke interference from above but that short of this limit they had very large opportunities of raising money by methods which would not be tolerated by public opinion at the present day and which were undoubtedly injurious from the economist's point of view. Moreland *From Akbar to Aurangzeb* p 295

² *Akbar the Great Moghul* pp 368-9

inflicted arbitrarily by local despots"¹ It is not a pretty nor an attractive picture It will, however, be a mistake to judge its deficiencies by the standards of modern administration with its awakened public conscience and ideals of absolute equality of treatment for all Nor, indeed, was any other system practicable in a loosely-knit empire held together by imperfect loyalties and maintained as a machine for collecting revenue for an extravagant court, and as a weapon for waging aggressive wars The internal history of Sind for one hundred and fifty years after its annexation by Akbar shows as clearly as any other part of the Moghul dominions these characteristic deficiencies of Moghul government

V *The Kalhōra power in the eighteenth century*

The Kalhōra² as a dynastic force rose very gradually to pre-dominance They did not disappear in a sudden *débâcle* The nature of their vague and indeterminate rise will be obvious to the student who considers the general features of the Moghul period just described As a ruling house the Kalhōra may be said to date from 1736, but members of the tribe had been prominent in Sind affairs for at least half a century before that date Similarly the Kalhōra were not swept away in 1778 by a *coup d'état* of Mīr Bījar Khān Tālpūr, resulting in the defeat and death of Ghulām Nabī Kalhōra They continued to survive as a disturbing influence till the very end of the eighteenth century The confused politics of Sind, Kelāt, Afghānistān, Cutch, Jodhpūr and Bahāwalpūr were a fertile breeding ground of the turmoil which succeeded the deposition of Abdul Nabī Kalhōra and this commotion had hardly subsided before 1803 by which time the Tālpūrs were firmly established as the family in power There is no adequate history of the Kalhōra The best account of them was in 1799 written by Nathan Crowe, an Englishman who knew by personal experience conditions in Sind at the end of the eighteenth century, and this account is amongst the records of the Bombay Government Postans writing in 1843 took over, almost verbatim and without acknowledgement, much of what Crowe had written, and the substance of Crowe's account

¹ *Akbar the Great Moghul*, p 383

² 'The Kalhōra were originally Channo Sindhis and therefore converted Hindus When the family rose to distinction it asserted a right to be called Benī Abbās, but their Shajarō or genealogical tree was pronounced by the learned to be a complete failure Upon this they sent a messenger to copy the documents in the possession of the holy men of Sehrah Khatibah and when the latter offered some objection the Kalhōra confiscated their feofs, attacked and destroyed their villages, carried off the copper plates upon which the Shajarō was delineated and then became undoubted descendants from Abbās and Murshīds' Burton *History of Sindh*, p 410

will be found in Postans' *Observations on Sind*. The object of this book is not to describe in detail the history of the Kalhōro power but merely to indicate its salient characteristics with reference to the social history of Sind during the period 1690-1760. The chief stages in the life of the Kalhōro power may be briefly summarized. There are five such stages, first, the acceptance by the Moghul Emperor of members of the Kalhōro tribe as Viceroys or Governors in Sind—a period which began in 1701, second, the extension and consolidation of the local power of the Kalhōro Governors till Delhi had by 1736 recognized them as semi-independent rulers of the country, third, after the invasion of Nādir Shāh in 1739, the transfer of theoretical suzerainty over Sind from the Moghul Empire to the Persian kingdom, which resulted in the Kalhōra becoming subordinate to the Persian monarch and liable to pay tribute to him, fourth, about 1747, the transference of this suzerainty from the Persian king to the Pathān kingdom at Kābul consequent upon the military successes of Ahmad Shāh Durānī, the founder of modern Afghānistān, by which change the Kalhōra became feudatories of Kābul and had to pay tribute to that power, fifth, the struggle between Kalhōra and Tālpūrs which began in 1778 and lasted more or less continuously till the end of the century, a period of civil war in which the Tālpūrs, with the aid of the Balūchīs, then settled in Sind in considerable numbers, were at last able to destroy the failing powers of the Sindhi ruling family. Throughout the whole period from 1737 onwards the Kalhōra were never actually full masters in their own house. They were required to pay an annual tribute and usually did their utmost to avoid doing so. They were so far successful in that, by their obstructiveness and local influence, coupled with the fact that Sind was difficult campaigning country for a power resident at Kābul and that the Afghān kingdom itself after the death of Ahmad Shāh in 1773 showed the usual signs of weakness typical of oriental autocracy, the tribute was gradually reduced in amount and was usually very much in arrears. In this way a gradual but uncertain independence was with difficulty established to such an extent that, when Britain appeared in Sind in the first decade of the nineteenth century in a character other than that of a commercial people bent mostly on the profits of foreign trade, the ruling house of the Tālpūrs had become virtually independent of control. Sind was then to all intents and purposes a sovereign and petty Muslim state, which was its condition when Sir Charles Napier added it to the East India Company's possessions in 1843. The aim of all Sind policy from 1701 onwards was to make Sind independent of Moghul, Persian and Pathān, to diminish the payment of tribute to the suzerain authority, to preserve the land

as a closed terrain into which no foreigners of any sort were allowed entrance except with the utmost difficulty. These facts adequately explain the remarkable phenomenon that, despite the presence of East India Company factories in Sind in both seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the beginning of the nineteenth century the country was to Europeans a *terra incognita* to such an extent as to evoke the flood of descriptive works on the country which poured upon the world in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Kalhōra themselves showed no special genius for government except that they followed a consistent policy of determined isolation and recognized the importance of irrigation works. They were a Sindhi tribe of obscure origin of the type that is now classed as Jāmōt,¹ that is, non-Balūch original inhabitants of the Indus valley, settled in a portion of Upper Sind in the area that now forms part of the Lārkhāna and Sukkur districts. They were the first Sindhi dynasty to wield permanent power since the fall of the Samma, the builders of Tatta, who had ruled Sind for two hundred and thirty years before the advent of the Arghūns and the Tarkhāns from Central Asia. Their rule had therefore some elements of popularity in the countryside. This popularity was strengthened by the peculiar character of their reputation as holy men, descendants of a sainted mendicant, a kind of being who has always made a very vivid appeal to the Muslim inhabitants of the Lower Indus valley. The reign of the Kalhōra was interrupted by three acute spasms of civil war, the first on the death of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro in 1754, the second on the deposition of Sārfarāz Khān Kalhōro in 1775, and the third and fatal internecine conflict that resulted in the supersession of Kalhōro by Tālpūr. Apart from these periods of commotion and unrest in the country itself there were continual threats of invasion of Sind occasioned by the intransigence of the Kalhōra in the payment of tribute to their suzerains of Persia and Afghānistān. It will therefore be readily realized that Lieutenant James is not very far from the truth when he says in his interesting account of the Chāndookah pargana 'Chāndookah in common with the rest of Sind has been the scene of many a bloody conflict, its fields of corn trampled under by the invading horde and its plains saturated with the blood of hundreds shed in civil strife or in contests with the vicegerents of the Delhi Empire. In earlier ages it is true we may feel interested in the bold struggle of the country for its freedom but as each succeeding dynasty ascended the throne and retained the throne solely by the sword we can subsequently see in Sind but one continued battle-field, the scene of usurpation, tyranny and bloodshed. The steel

¹ See *Census of India* 1931, Vol VIII, pp 495-sqq

One great difficulty in dealing with the mass of poems of the Muntakhab lies in the irregular length of the baits. It is not easy to run one bait into another in order to obtain the regularity characteristic of English poetry. The baits are usually self-contained. The thought often changes abruptly from one to another. The unequal length of the baits is therefore something which the translator can do little to cure, even if it be thought that a cure is desirable. Personally I regard the irregularity in length as something worth preserving because it is a sign of the spontaneity which is a supreme merit of the original. No translator can regard his work as satisfactory unless he induces his readers to seek the original for themselves. I am hopeful therefore that this work, whatever its shortcomings, will lead to the study of the Sindhi text. Scholars and lovers of rhythmical language are assured of finding in it something that will prove of lasting delight.

H T SORLEY

Bombay

March 31st, 1938

THE RISĀLO OF SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT

Re-arranged and translated into English verse

‘ Life like a dome of many coloured glass
Stains the white radiance of eternity ’

SHELLEY

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PART II THE DAILY ROUND

PART III LOVE

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*Arrangement of the Surs in this Translation and in
Pōkardās's edition of the Muntakhab
This Translation*

Pōkardās's Edition
Surs showing cantos, couplets,
verses and wais

PART I

I	Kalyān	I
II	"	2
III	Chaman Kalyān	3
IV	"	I
V	"	2 (I-3)
VI	"	2 (4-7)
VII	"	3
VIII	"	4
IX (I, II and III)	Samundī	I, 2 and 3
X	Srirāg	I
XI	"	2
XII	"	3
XIII	Khambhāt	4
XIV	"	I
XV	Āsa	2
XVI	"	I
XVII	Prabhātī	2
XVIII	Barvo Sindhi	Whole
XIX	Bilāwal	Whole
XX	"	I
XXI	"	2
PART II		
I	Sārang	I
(I)	"	2
(II)	"	3 (I-3)
(III)	"	3 (4-7)
(IV)	"	4 (I-5 (2))
(V)	"	4 (5(3)-(11))
(VI)	"	4 (6-8)
(VII)	"	

*This Translation**Pōhaidās's Edition*
Surs showing cantos, couplets,
verses and wais

II	(I)	Kēdārō	I
	(II)	"	2
	(III)	"	3
	(IV)	"	4
	(V)	"	5
III	(I)	Sōrath	I
	(II)	"	2
	(III)	"	3 and Wai
	(IV)	"	
IV		Khāhōrī	Whole
V	(I)	Rāmkalī	I
	(II)	"	2
	(III)	"	3
	(IV)	"	4 (I-4)
	(V)	"	4 (5-8)
	(VI)	"	5
	(VII)	"	6
VI	(I)	Kāpātī	(I-8)
	(II)	"	(9-13)
	(III)	"	(14-25)

PART III

Sasūī and Punhūn

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III	Dāhūr	I
IV	"	2
V	"	3
VI	Kōhārī	I
VII	"	2
VIII	"	3
IX	"	4
X	"	5
XI	"	6
XII	Sasūī Ābrī	I
XIII	" "	2
XIV	" "	3

SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT

This Translation

307

Pōkardās's Edition
Surs showing cantos, couplets,
verses and waīs

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XVI	" "	5
XVII	" "	6
XVIII	" "	7
XIX	" "	8
XX	" "	9
XXI	" "	10
XXII	Dēsī	1
XXIII	"	2
XXIV	"	3
XXV	"	4
XXVI	"	5
XXVII	"	6
XXVIII	"	1
XXIX	Maizūrī	2
XXX	"	3
XXXI	"	4
XXXII	"	5
XXXIII	"	6
XXXIV	"	1
XXXV	Husamī	2
XXXVI	"	3
XXXVII	"	4
XXXVIII	"	5
XXXIX	"	6
XL	"	7
XLI	"	8
XLII	"	9
XLIII	"	10
XLIV	"	11
XLV	"	12 (1-4)
XLVI	"	12 (5-24)
<i>Suhinī and Mēhār</i>		
I, II, III, IV, V	Suhinī	
VI	"	
VII	"	
		1, 2, 3, 4, 5
		6 (1)
		6 (2-4)

*This Translation**Pōkardās s Edition*
Surs showing cantos, couplets,
verses and waīs

VIII	Suhmī	7 (1-3)
IX	„	7 (4-15)
X	„	7 (16-25)

Mōmul and Rānō

I, II, III, IV	Mōmul Rānō	1, 2, 3, 4
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Līlan and Chanēsar

I	Līlan Chanēsar	1
II	„ / „	2 (1-5)
III	„ „	2 (6-11)
IV	„ „	3 (1-3)
V	„ „	3 (4-6)
VI	„ „	3 (7-13)

Māruī and Umar

I	Māruī	1 (1-5)
II	„	2 (1-5)
III	„	1 (waī)
IV	„	2 (6-9)
V	„	3 (1-10)
VI	„	3 (waī)
VII	„	4
VIII	„	5

PART I

MERCY AND GRACE

‘ God of Mercy, God of Grace,
Show the brightness of Thy face ’

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I GOD THE ALL-POWERFUL

In the Beginning Allāh is,
 Who Knoweth All, Who sits aloft,
 The Lord of all the World that be
 He is the Mighty, Old of Days,
 Of His Own Power Established
 He is the Lord, One, Only One,
 Sustainer and Compassionate
 Sing ye the praise of Him Who Heals,
 The True One, sing ye praise of Him
 He is the One, Who Hath No Peer
 Confess ye this In heart of heart
 Acknowledge ye The Praised One, who
 The Causer of the Causes is
 Why go ye then and bow yourselves
 In front of others, why go ye?
 Men were who said 'He is the One,
 Without a Peer', in heart of heart
 Acknowledging the Praised One, who
 The Causer of the Causes is
 Such men did from the righteous path
 Set not an erring foot astray
 Men are whom God the One hath cut,
 Whose bodies He hath cut in twain
 Who, having seen the severed parts,
 Doth not for self, unfortunate,
 Desire like theirs the severance?
 God who is One no rival hath
 Herein of Him the Oneness is,
 And righteousness of Truth But who
 Embraced false Two-ness lost indeed
 The savour and the salt of life

II THE HARD WAY

My weakness pleaseth In God's ears
 The cries of my love-torment ring
 I tasted from the gallows tree
 The goodness that my sorrows bring
 The gallows calls me Oh, my friends,
 Will any friend now come with me?
 They who have found the name of love
 Must go of love's necessity

The scaffold of its very self
Doth summon lovers Do ye seek
To know what love is ? Fare not forth
Put heads aside as little worth
And, asking then what love is, speak

The noose ('tis in the web of things)
Adorneth lovers Sayid sings
' They saw love's spear and trembled not
Upon the block they took their stand
Love called and they dissembled not
Love set them there 'Twas love's command '

When love takes knife in butcher hand,
Sharp be it not But rather may
Its edge be blunt For then on thee
Beloved's hands will longer stay

Of love thou knowest why and how ?
The knife falls Let no grumble start
Tell nought to others of the smart
Beloved caused thee Make thy vow
And keep the pain within thy heart

In front are lovers on the block
With heads prepared, they stand behind
Cut off thy head So failing not
Thou mayest true acceptance find
No severed heads then on the ground
Will bring thy failure to thy mind
Within the wineshop slaughter rolls
In waves of flooding unconfined

If sipping hath thy fancy led
The wineshop is the place for thee
Beside the wine-jar lay thy head
And, yielding it in bargain fee,
Quaff many cups of wine instead

Set not love's store against the wine
Nor count wine dear at such appraise
Prepare that head for cutting, thine
The wineshop is the place for them
Who by the wine-jars end their days

'Tis poison that all lovers sup
 But lovers see it and rejoice
 The bitter and the deadly cup
 Is theirs by use, by wonted choice
 'Love's arrow pierced them', says Latif
 The seas of separation roll
 And drown each single, separate, soul

Why for such drink do yearners ask
 If back they flee to save their lives
 Whene'er the vintners draw their knives ?
 But they whose heads are given for wine
 May sip the wine within the cask

Yes, let them think of wine indeed
 Whose severed bodies lie apart,
 Whose flesh within the cauldron burns,
 Who let their hands, with deadly turns,
 Wreak havoc on their living heart

Who dull existence would conserve ?
 For no such aim the lover strives
 One breath from the Beloved's lips
 Is better than a thousand lives
 And can this skin and bone of mine
 Compare with the Beloved's wine ?

III LOVE IS ENOUGH

The friends who planted in my heart
 The questings of my pain,
 My friends have gone and from my mind
 Have sorrow's fardel ta'en
 Nor pleaseth the voice of the Healer now,
 'Tis an empty sound and vain

O taste thou wisely, sweetness all,
 Of bitterness ne'er a trace,
 Beside thy friends thou shalt surely find
 But the griefs that have settled on thee
 And made thee their dwelling-place,
 To stranger folk wilt thou call to mind ?

The folk will ask, and a smile extend,
 ' Tell us, where is hand of thy Friend ? '
But lovers from 'neath the spear of love
 Take not themselves away
The lover meets death, head held above,
 And when there cometh the hour to slay,
 'Tis for death, thus slain, that the martyrs pray

IV THE PHYSIC

All wretched folk 'neath aching wound who bend
Are grateful for the pain that dwells within
They wind the clew of torment to its end
And cut not short the thread of life they spin

O thou Physician, give me not the dose
That maketh well. For I shall then be strong
To ask of me how now my illness goes
Then never friend may haply chance along

False healers have my feebleness unmanned
The true physician did not come to me
But quacks employed their cauterising brand
And brought more aches and pains than formerly

V THE FIRE OF LOVE

In agony loved ones are turning
There streameth the cry of ' Woe '
There is torment of fire and the burning
Consumes their vitals and, lo !
From their reins cometh savour of burning
Come look at this hap with discerning
If, trusting in faith, ye go

Do I shrink if my body be toasted
On embers of bābul and thorn ?
On the spit let my vitals be roasted
I am gone from the hands of the Healer
To my friends I must hie me forlorn

Ask the moths what know they of burning
That have offered their lives to the blaze
A thrust from the lance of yearning
Hath pierced their vitals turning
And put an end to their days

VI THE FLAMES

If fancy make a moth of thee
The flames thou seest, faltering not
Beloved's rare effulgence see
And enter in, as bridegroom ought
Still art thou as the unbaked clay
Thou knowest not the oven is hot

Near the devouring fire they came,
These moths determined Scorching blast
Did not their steady courage tame
All on the flames their bodies massed
In one wild weltering holocaust

Within the heart red embers glow,
But never outward vapours rise
Heap up the fire and fan desire
That being burnt may make thee wise

They surely in the trial have won
Who died by death within the flame
But they whose hands put out the brands
Have gotten darkness for their name
Within whose heart love's fires glow,
They've learnt all men can ever know

VII LOVE'S PAIN

By lovers ne'er is God forgot
In sighing dies their breath away
They take no rest and sink o'erwhelmed
If one sharp word Beloved say

For lovers are not like to thee
Unmanned limbs thee lusty keep
They stand before Beloved's door
And daily tears of anguish weep
Nor any other way is right
To find acceptance in Love's sight

Even now a mere straw pricks thee
And a trickle of blood doth start
But the wounds that thy loved ones cause thee,
How wilt thou bear their smart ?
And why seekest thou to discover
This love that tears the heart ?

It doth not make thee loverwise
To hide behind the screen and peep
Thy body in Beloved's yard
Thou hast not mortified nor marred
It is but empty vain emprise
To laugh and eat and sleep

O mother ! if thou hast not shut
The peeping crannies where folk peer,
Thou wilt not the Beloved see
In perfect beauty full and clear

O lovers ! sit by loved one's path,
Nor weary from Friend's lattice go
The loved one mercy's medicine gives
And from thy hot wounds takes the glow
Without thee, Love, life hath no spell
But Thou, without us, livest well

O lovers ! sit by loved one's path
And when from out the wineshop's store
They offer wine, keep steady head
And go not near the vintner's door

VIII THE HEALING

When there's no need no healer calls
Had love's sore pain been in thy side,
Then surely had the healers come
And healing hand to thee applied

Whate'er the healer gave to thee
Be brave and suffer Say not this
' They severed friend from friend apart '
Say rather ' Friends they joined in bliss '

Be patient, bow thy head and see
 Lo ! anger is a mighty woe
 In patience there abideth joy
 O honest Sir, this surely know

Be patient Patient folks prevail
 The stiffnecked are in sorry plight
 The palate of all hasty men
 Hath never savoured patience right

He eats the bread of punishment
 Whose early anger breaketh forth
 The man of malice holds his robe
 And finds within it nought of worth

IX THE SAILING (I)

O Mother, stay where the boatmen stay ,
 Where their hawser is, remain,
 That they may not leave thee and slip away
 Plunging thy life in pain

O Mother, hard by their hawsers stay,
 Filling thy mind with woe,
 Lest the boatmen cheat thee and slip away
 Having kindled thy heart to a glow

While still their anchor unweighed they leave,
 Take speed in the chance and go,
 Lest the sailors pass from the land to cleave
 The channels where waters flow

O happy youth and happy tide
 When my friends cast out on the trail !
 I wept and wept but they would not bide
 Ah misery what can avail ?
 My tortured soul the trader hanged
 When he left me and hoisted sail

Ah, lack a day ! when they went away,
 To leave me alone, alone
 Age followed age in unending stage
 But there came back never an one
 For them who went will the heart be rent
 Of a stricken woman o'erthrown

When the sailors sailed out over the deep
The surge of the ocean's trend
Did bear them off, and they went away
Whither journeying hath no end

O mother of mine ! in my paltry life
This sailor memory stays,
And the trader seeking the distant port
Made the days succeed the days

The sailor bond that binds my heart
Is surely with grief entwined
The trader hath rent my soul in twain
That he leave me alone behind

Love pierced my soul and he fell to tears
When he set his hands on the prow
This commerce that thou hast learned, O Friend,
Have thou no truck with it now

Love letteth me not the rope untie,
But graspeth the very spar
This night, O Friend, for me remain ,
Go not, Beloved, to part us twain
In thy seeking to fare so far

Surely my melting soul is nought,
For while I stood on the strand,
Love came himself, the cable sought
And pushed the boat from the land
Of sailors I knew no useful lore,
Else then had my body's strength,
While the boat was standing there by the shore,
Been twined in the cable length

For friends who set on their journey forth
My body doth live in pain
O tell me in happy notes, O Crow,
When will they hither again ?
'Twas some powerful cause that banished my friends
In an exile over the main

O come, Belov'd, the tips of the sedge
Have been seared by the wind from the north
For thee, O Master of mine, my mouth
Thousands of vows sent forth

If thou would'st come to me now, my Love,
 Full joy to my soul I'd impart
 If, Mother, mayhap my lover should come,
 I'd cling to him, cleave to him, here in my home
 And speak out the words of my heart

If, Mother, my loved one should come to me now,
 In quarrelling joy would be sped
 Thou didst promise, my love, but few days to be gone,
 How long are the days that have fled?

O heart within me, out sally and see
 The abode that the Loved One doth know
 And there on his threshold stoop thee down
 And kisses on kisses bestow

Me let them not forgetful desert,
 Those friends for whom I did stay
 (And my eager eyes did scan the skies)
 When they will come to me, enter my home to me,
 My griefs they'll all banish away

IX THE SAILING (II)

In sooth today the traders talk
 Of going away and my friends
 Have set their hearts on departing too
 I weep but it makes no amends,
 They will not linger O Mother of mine,
 How long can I hold them back,
 Those sailors who set their ships on the deep
 When they made the cable slack?

From my heart there are those whom I may not loose,
 Nor may I forgotten be
 For their life to my own lifestrings is bound
 And lo! The crew when the north wind blew,
 Did set their canvas free
 They weighed their anchor and took their course
 Where the tide ran favourably,
 And longing there stays in my heart always
 For the men who plough the sea

The north wind's season is come and yet
 My heart hath no rest from pain
 The sailors, I trow, twist lanyards now
 And are oiling their boats again

O Mother, I said (for I knew the sails)
 The sailors are back from the world
 Oh ! on this ship may my loved one come
 The bunting flutters ! The sails are furled !
 Those women, I vow, are smiling now
 Whose friends have reached their home

IX THE SAILING (III)

Though I move my limbs yet I may not reach
 The ports that are far for me
 I have no purse, not a money-lot,
 To make my truck with, and pay my scot,
 And climb where I wish to be

O Thou who ferriest folks across,
 Make me my loved one meet
 O Captain, I stand at thy cabin door
 To pour my prayers at thy feet

They had no scot to pay their lot ,
 The sailors without their fee
 Would grant no passage and all the day
 Till sunset came, the ship made way
 Across the waters' face,
 And when it served the vessel's need
 (So sings the Sayid) the Lord decreed
 An excellent landing-place

I was standing myself by the very wharf
 When my friends let the hawser go
 Within my heart must some weakness be
 Or else my friends to come back to me
 Some wondrous kindness show

O Mother of his, hold not thou back
 That trader son of thine
 Till the twelfth month sere did he not appear ,
 Then his gear on the shore he gathered once more
 And sailed off over the brine

I was standing myself by the very wharf
 When my love let the hawser go
 Within my heart must some weakness be
 Or else my love to come back to me
 Doth wondrous kindness show

X THE TRAFFICKING

I have gained by my haggling the flimsy and false,
 The vows of my God I have broken
 My head on its empty framework of sins
 Is a crushed and a miserable token
 O dullard, thou knowest the sense of this thing,
 For its speech hath already been spoken.

Thou hast gained by thy haggling the flimsy alone,
 Go, tell then to God thou art lacking
 Drive out thy deceit. For the Lord loveth truth
 Love's bonfire blazing and cracking
 Kindle within thee and so wilt thou trade
 That gain there come of thy packing

The swing of the surge sets foul and the boat
 Cannot suffer its flooding and swelling
 I loaded her up to her hatches with sins
 In multitude far beyond telling
 God! show Thy favour and take me across
 This ocean in terror compelling

Go Make thy purchase of goodly gear
 That loseth no virtue in aging
 For this thou wilt sell on a distant strand
 And lose not a plack in thy gauging
 So traffic in gear that will keep thee secure
 In the hazardous fight thou art waging

The galley is aged. Heap not so high
 The chattels that are of thy lading
 Her timbers are riddled, by keel and by strake,
 The waters pour through them invading
 Her doom hath been sealed. Oh! ponder thou well
 The doings of yesterday's trading

Thou hast heard with thine ears the watery surge
'Tis here by thine eyes for the seeing
In the watches of night when men sleep, says Latif,
Thou didst not remember its being
Thou didst bring thy craft to the eddying surf
For neglect this thy weird thou art dreeing

That galley of thine that goes crazy with age
Mayst thou save from the blasts that are blowing
For weak are the folk whose ship thou hast set
On the waterway turgid and flowing
These chattels of thine mayst thou bring, says the poet,
Where the lights of the harbour are showing

The grains that are stuff of thy trading bring
And load on the boat for the sailing
The waves will fight thee, forgetful one,
But sit not thus, sad one, bewailing
When thou wilt find thyself cast in the surf
I know not, a wretch unavailing

O boatmen! the best of both worlds can't be won
If all night by rudder you're sleeping,
Morning-news of you there, over there, all will ask
(Sleep-drowsed, in their helmsman trust keeping,
On board all are sleeping! You sleep, sailors, too!)
All who're sheltered of God, their trials will pass through
No port-peril harvest's for reaping

XI BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

O all thy works to God commit,
To God on whom there falleth praise
In meek submission being true
From tribulation free thy days
With mercy then the Mighty Lord
Will fashion what thy heart essays

Among good folk to do good deeds
Is surely everybody's plan
Thou dost good deeds amongst the bad
Is there, like thee, another man?

Good deeds are by good people done
 Ill deeds are with the wicked found
 Their works of goodness do perform
 Whom good with fitting grace hath crowned

The lapidaries now are gone
 Who diamond pierced and ruby red
 But they who followed after them
 Have not the skill to work in lead
 Where craftsmen wrought of yore, the smiths
 Beat worthless pewter now instead

The taste is all for tawdry trash,
 When pearls are given in change away
 If I offered truth in garment's hem
 Of very shame I'd die today

Where'er today the pearls are found
 There now, alas, the thieves abide
 Good honest luck today is theirs
 Who laid their precious gems aside

XII THE LADING

To thee I said, O good my friend,
 No crazy wreck on work engage
 The waves, of certainty, will swamp
 The sails and sheets that fail for age

The surge will fight thee, foolish man,
 Arise and ask that mercy be
 I know not how it happed yestreen
 Thou wert not cast within the sea

Cloves, cardamoms and store of cloth,
 Sweet-smelling grass and ambergris,
 O merchant, let thy cargo be
 That thou dost set upon the seas
 No crazy wreck on work engage,
 For hark! Ahead the breakers rage

Ināyat says 'The water's dread
Lives in the rolling ocean swell'
The milk of luck stays in the house
Of them with whom true things do dwell

Cloves, cardamoms and cloth and pearls,
They won wherewith to fill their store
Down in the water deep they found,
Of precious lockers, wealth galore

They tied their boats with hawsers fast,
So doth Latīf the Poet tell
They clomb aboard and to the Lord
The Prophet vows they vowed well
'O Thou-that-Art-with-Mercy save
The boats they set upon the swell'

XIII THE VOYAGING

Where shoals the channel, pull thy boat
And tie it up beside the brink
Who but thyself will help thee bring
It where to the depth the waters sink?

They who can swim upon the sea
Swim o'er the runnels small and great
But they who swim not load their heads
With burden of their turbans' weight

In trash I traded not a pearl
I laid in store The Sayid sings
'In lead I trafficked' Thus, O God,
My state unto thy mercy clings

While by the port the danger lasts,
O helmsmen, stay from slumber far
The whirling of the waters is
As frothing whey within the jar

The lightning flashed To luckless men
Fool slumber came and they who thought
They were from dire occurrence free
Were by their very sleep unwrought

Let Mecca be thy port or no,
 Delay not, urge thy vessel on
 Repeat at Lord Muhammad's tomb
 The holy words of God and doom,
 That succour come to thee anon
 So regulate thy ways and strive
 That thou at Mecca mayst arrive

XIV BELOVED'S BEAUTY

On the forehead of my Belov'd are set signs that are kind for me
 With a smile he comes to my courtyard where I long for him, mine
 own
 Who claims that the moon with the sun of Belov'd can ever the
 equal be,
 Though the moon to a white perfection on the fourteenth day be
 grown ?
 In my house there are folk a-talking of Beloved at the door
 In my house are happy welcomings The jealous jealous be !
 And yet, were a thousand suns to rise and moons four score and four,
 In the name of Allāh, without my love I should nothing but darkness
 see
 O moon, such a paltry thing as thou art, would I ever compare to
 the Friend ?
 His splendour gleameth for ever and lo ! only at night thou art
 bright
 At the hour of thy morning's uprising first thy glance on Beloved
 bend
 ' Beloved ! on thee are our trusting eyes set every day without end ',
 For Allāh's sake, speak thus in his ear of our lovesick sorrowful
 plight

XV THE WAYWARD HEART

O camel, cease thy lingering
 And lengthen out thy pace
 This once my loved one bring me nigh
 Then in thine ears there cannot ring
 The semblance of a yearning sigh

O camel, cease to lag behind
 And lengthen out thy pace
 This night I have it in my mind
 To see my loved one's face

For thee I bring the sandalwood
Let others salt-bush eat
This very night be thine the mood
To take me where my loved one stood
That there we twain may meet

The camel, mother, for my needs
I brought and tied beside the tree
When he on wealth of buds might feast,
He, sneaking, on the salt-bush feeds,
The mean and miserable beast,
Undoing all my work for me

The stupid brute I tell and tell
That in the milkbush there's no zest ,
Yon poison bush is many's knell
But hath his silly head obsessed

Around in plenty for his need
Is ripened scrub of sandalwood
The sulky grumbler pays no heed
And makes me weep my tears in blood

And wilt thou thus, O camel, pass
The sandalwood, nor drink thy fill ?
Thou seekest not the fragrant grass
But spurnest it as something ill
It must be thy distorted mood
That made thee find the salt-bush good

Arise and bind him Let him free
And he will lose himself and roam
I feed him and he sulkier gets
Put on the saddle when he frets
With shackled feet still growl will he
But will not wander far from home

To keep him fast I tied him up
The shackles bound with tug and strain
The beast has gone with hobbles on
To eat the salt-bush once again !
O Lord, into this camel's head
Put something that in sense doth share
O save him, Lord of Mercy, save
Such is Latif the poet's prayer

XVI ONE-NESS

Across life's ocean no one yet
 With 'I' as guide his foot hath set
 God indeed who is One
 Adoreth One-ness alone

Take Two-ness off to burn with fire
 Existence may man's tears require
 This weeping should be done
 Before One-ness alone

On self alone while eyes be set
 No truth of worship can'st thou get
 First kill all life's emprise
 Say Word of Sacrifice

What-no-existence-knows hath grace
 To raise the slave to lofty place
 Who secret are in their heart
 Are secret in outward part

Here how can mystery be told
 Which the Beloved doth enfold ?

XVII THESE PALTRY EYES OF MINE

These paltry eyes of mine
 Have brought me favour's grace
 If evil but before them be,
 They see Love in its place

If paltry eyes of mine
 Did aught but Love disclose,
 I'd pluck them out to cast
 As morsels for the crows

Mine eyes have made a feast
 Where kin and friends engage
 It is as if life, body, soul
 Had gone on pilgrimage

All day they look, and yet
 They halt out there to see,
 They saw and recognized Love
 And have returned to me

Strange habits have mine eyes
To trade with others' pain
Love's conquest they have made
Where weapon brings no gain

XVIII THE MUSICIAN

Musician, you are wearied Where were you yesterday ?
Give up, Latif is saying, your ways of giving in
The door of the Almighty, go beg there on your way
And gifts that are of value win

The gifts of the Almighty do not depend on caste
The worker is the finder The King, All-Powerful, Great,
Bears coaxings of the ignorant With Him the night who passed
Will find that trouble's burden hath no weight

So, daily, earnest effort make before the Giver's door
No other business has a singing stroller but to sing
'Thou mighty art I yearner am Thou gift on gifts dost pour,
While I am but a senseless thing

I heard Thy call, O God, and put my fiddle on my shoulder
Thou mighty art I yearner am Thou gift on gifts dost pour
I am a blockhead but Thou art of magic stone the holder,
While I am only iron's core

If Thou but touch this iron 'me', gold I should be by reason
Thou Giver art of gifts, the rest but wandering beggars are
There falls in its due season rain, but Thou in every season
Dost shower Thy plenteous bounty far
Oh, would'st Thou to my house but come,
All wealth I'd have and every sum '

XIX THE JOY OF BELOVED

After what goest thou ? Why dost thou remain
The servant of others ?
Stirrup-leather lay hold of, the Merciful One's,
E'en the Lord of the World's
For certain that man will be happy whose love
Towards Allāh is turned

Today my poor eyes have remembered my friends
 And the dropping of tears
 Doth not cease from my cheeks At the sight of loved ones
 My desire doth not die
 Mankind covets wealth But all the day long
 Covet I my Belov'd
 I renounce the whole world for the sake of that Friend
 Whose name made me glad
 When the memory comes of the love of that Friend
 Sudden cries burst on cries
 In gracious emergence when walks the Belov'd
 E'en earth itself sings
 'In God's name' and lo! on the tracks of his feet
 Are the road's kisses planted
 The hours astonished stand by in respect
 I swear by the Lord,
 The face of Beloved's most lovely of all
 It's the way of the world
 To alter love's virtue and change it to dross
 No one e'er eats
 The flesh of mankind In this world will be left
 Only fragrant delight
 All the rest of mankind wear but friendship's false cloak
 Only one or two are
 Who are one with our heart O Giver, vouchsafe
 That friends present be
 On the tongues of my friends there is mention once more
 That we're reconciled
 My friends have this way that, break I with them,
 They break not with me

XX GOD'S MERCY

The kettledrums are hollow break them up
 Seek no door but the Holy Prophet's door
 He bears the loads of all who run for help
 And is the stay of helpless folk and poor

The Kindly Helper turns not face aside
 When myriads seek his mercy, says Latif
 His supplants stand in dumbness, million massed,
 And in his open smiling win relief

At sundry landing-places do not halt
Look for the easy bank within the mere
The Helper will you mint of money give
Go thither, land of princely Rāhū near

Watch for the turban of the Bounteous One,
Who made the luckless wealthy, who destroys
The rust of want for millions when he speaks
And lifts his head aloft to work such joys

Serene He stands, The Friend and Comforter,
Who calls to His companions Every one
By help of that dear Comforter will cross
In safety land wherein the passes run

XXI THE GUIDE

Live on, O Sweet One, live
May mine ears never hear
An evil word of Thee
Brought each to other near,
Mine eyes and heart combine
To speak of Thee and Thine

Live on, O Sweet One, live
May mine ears never hear
An evil word of Thee,
Of Thee who didst appear
But yesterday to grace
My soul's unworthiness

Like Him who Arab was
No one, nowhere I see
In full forefront He stands
Where the Apostles be
And He hath pride of place
In majesty and grace

'Near, nearer came to Him
The Angel of the Lord
Than two bows' distance is'
Thus saith the Holy Word
Lo this is the abode
In Heaven on Him bestowed

Almighty God be praised
Who brought me such a Guide
His like the world knows none,
Nor Sind, nor Surat side ,
Nor anywhere on earth
Hath knowledge of such worth

O beggar, go and beg
Before the Giver's door
Seek favour of none else
Gifts he himself doth pour
He sees men's state and gives
Them mercy in their lives

My Lord and Master puts
The Mullas to their shame,
His horsemen set behind,
To head the host He came
The Lion of the Lord
To us doth help afford

And ever in His hand
He bears the mighty sword
That cleaves backbones of foes
His bounty's rich accord
A thousand Hātims' store
Hath darkened and made poor
Without Thee, Perfect One, who can
Help, succour give to helpless man ?

PART II
THE DAILY ROUND

' The daily round, the common task
Will furnish all we ought to ask
Room to deny ourselves, a road,
To bring us daily nearer God '

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I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (I)

See, saith Latīf, the sombre cloud
Hath lowered and the big-dropped rain
Is fallen Take the cattle out
And make your way across the plain
Desert your huts Your panniers fill
Against the need of coming hours
It is no time in God-despair
To sit and idle Lo it showers !

See, saith Latīf, hath Allāh brought
The clouds in ever thickening mass
From brimming pools the waters flow
To make the footing green with grass
God, One indeed, of gracious thought
Hath clad the paths in verdure, rain
Is come, blithe rain, for them who roam
Wayfarers draw fresh breath again

Today too in the northern sky
The clouds are gathered black as hair
The lightning flashes bring the rain
And choose a crimson cloak to wear
My friends that dwelt in far-off parts
Are by this rain-force drawn to me
Today too in the northern sky
The clouds to peaks rise toweringly

The lightning flash of timely rain
Doth not our simple souls bewray
Come, friend of mine, return to me
The sulking days are gone for aye
Across the Holy Prophet's tomb
The lightning streaks did swiftly leap
They smiled in kindness on the scene
And filled the stream with water deep

O Guide, send now Thine orders forth
And fill this thirsty watering-place
The Holy Prophet, best of friends,
Hath showed his abounding grace

O Lord of Rain, for Allāh's sake,
Forget not them whom thirst doth try
The plains have flood of water Make
The grain that groweth cheap to buy

Upon the land pour shower on shower
That happy may the herdsmen be
The lightnings came to bring the rain
The black cloud's flash delighted me
There in the sky the nimbus grew
Until its burbling drops did start
My soul was sad The humming rain
Hath cleared the blight from off my heart

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (II)

Behind the tower the cloud today
Its form in lovely hues arrayed
Violas, fiddles, violins
And drums the happy people played

Last night out o'er the Padam Lake
The rangod emptied jar on jar
But wives are gloomy seeing cloud
And thinking of men's plight afar

They built them, spouseless, huts of reed,
But see them not Should north wind rise
And blow them down, who will there be
To hear the wives' complaining cries?

So may their guardian kin arrive
To give them shelter! Women see
The rainclouds and they think of men
And lose their souls in misery

They harken to the thunder's crash,
With heartstrings all a-quake with fear
Poor creatures, from their men cut off,
They speak no word to reach the ear

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (III)

The season's here
 Glad converse and sweet music sound
 Shrills cuckoo clear
 The ploughmen fit their ploughshares for the ground
 Herdsmen are happy Yea ! his fine array
 For joyous rain my friend has donned today

The season's here
 Glad converse and sweet music are
 Mass clouds appear
 The corn is cheap there's butter in the jar
 I spake the Word of God and by its art
 Cast out the rust that overlay my heart

The season's here
 Glad converse runs sweet music rings
 Rain's back to cheer
 Daylong I thought of friends (so Lakhmīr sings)
 My friends for whom these eyes of love did shine
 Have hither come and sought this house of mine

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (IV)

O Love, O Friend, may Allāh bring thee near me
 My life remembers, yearning with a full deep sigh
 I need the shelter they have made to cheer me
 No hut availeth if a chill wind whistle by
 Love, tell to kindly helpmeet my poor tale of woes
 Come timely, oft I may in shelter find repose

I shall of night-time's early cold be dying,
 O husband, perfect, if thy skirt enfold not me
 With cold I shiver neath the bedclothes lying,
 Or cling to door-pin, hoping dawn will bring me thee
 Like clouds in Sānwan, friends have gathered they are here
 They dwell with her who lifelong wished to have them near

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (V)

I need the shelter built for me
 No crazy hut have entered I
 Yea be she widowed who doth breathe
 One breathing after loved friend die

Today indeed towards the north
 Clouds form and water rains upon
 The earth to fill the hollow pits
 That men scooped out in days ago

O Master, build my shelter now
 Clouds I have seen athwart the sky
 ' Make Sānwan plans ', saith Jūnējō
 The thunder made my sorrow fly
 The lightning filled my heart with joy
 The sky is cloudy nor the sun
 Doth show his face with radiance clear
 The lightning bringeth kindly news
 Such as mankind is lief to hear

O heart of mine, be not cast down
 Soon wilt thou find thy friends again
 A second time has God arranged
 The fashioning of the clouds of rain
 To bring the rain the lightnings came
 To pour their water everywhere,
 This place and that and all around
 Will in such plenteous bounty share

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (VI)

The lightnings sped themselves aloft and glittered in Stamboul
 To Western parts they took their way
 They flashed and flickered in Cathay
 On Samarkand they lighted of their kindly memory full
 They fared to Rūm and Kābul and they reached to Kandahār
 O'er Delhī roared a thunder rain,
 And boomed above the Deccan plain
 And cast their living light-bolts out and over the Gīrnār
 They went aside and changed a course to verge on Jaisalmīr,
 On Bhuj a heavy drenching showered,
 On Dhat a gentle rain they poured
 And gladdened into happiness the folks of Bikanīr
 To Umārkōt they darted, there to flood the grassy meads
 On my Sind aye shed water, Lord,
 And plenty, Mercy's Self, accord
 Make this whole world to burgeon with Thy grace of rainy deeds

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (VII)

The orders of the Orderer pass
 The rain god doth his function fill
 The lightnings come to bring the rain
 The pattering raindrops are not still
 The grain-amassers, mad on gain,
 Do wring their hands and fifteen grows
 From five—a threefold quickening
 So speed life's pages to their close

May all who trade in famine greed,
 May all the misers disappear
 The cowherds tell of heavy rains,
 'All hope to feel Thy mercy near'
 Within my heart the cloud-bank spins,
 The outward sky is calm serene
 The lightnings rain for them who love
 And in Friend-trust have eyesight keen
 In great and greater mass they form
 The clouds that gathered from the north
 Far-off my friends were God hath joined
 Them with me on their journeying forth

II THE MARTYRS (I)

Muhurram's holy month is come,
 The Princes' day of woe
 And Allāh doth what pleaseth Him,
 The One who all doth know

Again is come Muhurram's month
 But no Imāms are here
 O God, in kindness let me be
 Medīna's ruler near

Medīna's lords did hie them forth
 But they did not come back
 O brother dyer, dye my clothes
 In sober mourning black

They wandered forth to cruel doom
 When fate with bloodshed came
 Because of their untimely end
 I put myself to shame

The hardness of their martyrdom
 Is as mild summer's day
 No trace, no sign of Goddes love
 Yazid's heart did display

With the Imāms that he'd be slain
 Did fate a promise write
 The hardness of their martyrdom
 Is unalloyed delight
 And God-moved men do meditate
 On Kerbela's sad fight

II THE MARTYRS (II)

Forget the feud with Ali's kin
 That thou dost wage, Yazid
 With Hassan and the Mīr Husain
 Thou'lt see no happy Īd

Ah ! luckless is the case of them
 Beside Yazid who stood,
 And yesterday did fight against
 The sons of Ali's blood

Oh ! that within the ranks had been
 Hassan at battle-tide
 As moth seeks flame, so had he sought
 To reach his brother's side

Who other Mīr Husain could help ?
 Of life still hope hath he
 In battle time who armour dons ,
 He showeth bravery

Alone who enters on the field
 But Hassan is not by
 To helpmate prove for Mīr Husain
 Or aid in servantry

The Princes' land is farther on
 And pours Yazid amain
 Blow upon blow The world doth know
 Of Hassan and Husain,

And of the battle that they fought
 Black-feathered arrows flew
 The Holy Sayid showed himself,
 A hero brave and true

To self and his forefathers' race
 In grief three gatherings cry
 Men in their homes, beasts in the wild
 And angels in the sky

Their friends are gone the fowls of air
 To earth dashed bodies frail
 O Allāh ! righteous Master, grant
 The Princes may prevail

If there be men within whose souls
 No grief in sorrow flow,
 On them Creation's Mighty Lord
 No favour will bestow

II THE MARTYRS (III)

Brave men love battle, from the field
 Hold not themselves aloof
 The holy ones did yield their lives
 In the Imāms' behoof

' With God's name on their lips they fought ',
 Their wisdom ran thuswise
 They garlanded and crowned were
 By maids of Paradise

To Kerbela as lions came
 The perfect ones of God
 They plied Egyptian blades and heaped
 The corses where they trod

And brave men trembled at the charge
 Of Lord Husain's array
 The Princes, perfect ones, are come
 To Kerbela today

SHAH ABDUL LATIF OF DHAKA
They showed on our path some way
In suffering's storm
That fate transformed the day of our life
With the things of pain.

God knoweth whom He loveth best:
Thou art His favourite child
The All-Best, Allah, reaching nothing
Doth as His heart is fain.

The wisdom in such actioning
Is veiled from mine eye.
Behind remaineth something deep
And wrapped in mystery.

II THE MARTYRS (IV)

Short are the days that horses live
Short days the warriors eke
Some time they man the forts, some time
The battleground they seek

Their home is Heaven Lo! the brave
Are gone to Paradise
From God they passed to God they came
Lord, fashion fate this wise

Thankful for them Thy visage show
The early doom of prime
Did plan the plan of Hur's emprise
And bring him at this time

And set him with that side to join
To the Imām he said
Whene'er he came, 'This life is thine,
This life, though I be dead'

'God sends not woe without the power
To bear that burden well
What I can bear, that will I do'
There too that hero fell

With wound sore-stricken, yielding life,
 A martyr Hur became
 He showed his brave courageous soul,
 A lover of the flame

As moths are ' May God's Messenger,
 The Holy Prophet, He,
 Thy Father's sire, e'en thus be pleased
 With this thy bravery '

' May I for such yield up my life '
 His lips did these words pour
 Blood dyed his beard red, red his teeth
 As is pomegranate flower

His turban shone upon the field
 As shines full fortnight's moon
 Well may that mother smile who meets
 Her Lord Muhammad, son

All glory to that hero be
 Upon the open plain
 Who, hacked to pieces on the field,
 With grievous blows was slain

II THE MARTYRS (V)

The men of Kūfa wrote God's name
 And thus their missive sent
 ' Thy subjects we , thou art our King
 Come hither pitch thy tent '

' The throne is thine ' They falsely spake
 And sided with Yazīd ,
 And brave men fell to unclean foes
 Who by ignoble deed

Sold trust for gain, in martyrdom
 The heroes' name to link ,
 And Kūfa's host no water gave
 In Kerbela to drink

SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT

The Princes' thoughts in Kerbela
Do with great Alī rest
They venture forth and gaze around
And thus their faith attest

Come, O Thou Lord Muhammad, come
Causer of Causes, rise
An early dove from Kerbela
Its weary journey flies

Halting by God's apostle's tomb
It uttereth this doom
' Muhammad, Causer of Causes, Lord,
Come, rise up in thy might
The glitter of the flashing sword
Hath shone before my sight '

III THE KING AND THE MINSTREL

The Story

Rai Diāch was king of Girnār. His sister had a son named Bijal about whom a fakīr had predicted that he was fated to Diāch. The horrified mother cast her son away in a box upon a river, wishing to be rid of so ill-omened a child. The box floated down the river and was found by a professional minstrel who took the child out and brought him up to be a musician. Bijal, ignorant of his noble birth, became a past-master of music and won fame by his singing. Sōrath was the daughter of a king Anerai and her beauty was such that Diāch was enamoured of her at first sight and married her. Later hostilities broke out between Diāch and Anerai. Anerai besieged Girnār but was unable to capture it. Anerai then proclaimed that he would reward with great wealth anyone who brought him Diāch's head. When Bijal heard this he went to Diāch. He so charmed him with his music and singing that Diāch, captivated, said he would give him all the wealth he had. But Bijal wanted no wealth, only the head of the king. Infatuated by the music, the king at last consented to yield up his head to Bijal. The poems of 'The King and The Minstrel' are concerned with the musician's visit to the palace of Diāch, the singing and playing, the chaffering for the musician's reward and the grief of Sōrath when the minstrel won his way and obtained, as the fakīr had foretold, the head of the king.

III THE KING AND THE MINSTREL (I)

With hope set in Allāh he parted from here,
 The Singer who decked with a stringing
 Of tassels and rattles the fiddle he played
 He saw from afar the royal sedan
 Of King Diāch and thus began
 At that very moment with prayer humbly prayed
 To Him who is One
 'O Merciful Master, by Thee be it made
 That the King shall delight in my singing'
 'From a strange land I'm come, having travelled last month
 If the night take a long time in speeding,
 E'en let me go now But this ponder well,
 O Sōrath's good spouse, in thy heart,
 To this beggar thy favours impart
 For he midst his foes hath come hither to dwell,
 At thy door, O King,
 Others' doors left behind, while the prayers on prayers swell
 In thy presence of suppliant pleading'
 'Nought else doth he beg give the jewel without price
 O Sōrath's good spouse, do me favour
 Others' doors I have left I am come to thy door
 With a turn of thy palms
 Give this beggar thine alms
 Fill his empty lap up' There was wonder galore
 That Bījal the Singer
 Should sing till the dawn and the King (nay! nay more!)
 The Sultān, found joy of full flavour
 As in his red swing he reclined and he cried
 'Come up, sacred bard, where clear space is
 At thy feet I would pour out in sacrifice
 A mint of money This head's my guest
 Come, here I yield it at thy request'
 In some men a deep perception lies
 To life's great mystery
 They reached In that Secret they made them wise
 Of things hidden whereof this the trace is
 Man is My secret I am his'
 Here lies the key to mysteries
 This phrase the singer took to sing
 The song he sang before the King
 And when he sang, where there were Two,
 The pair to single One-ness grew

III THE KING AND THE MINSTREL (II)

The first night came
Beside the fort the man of music sang
And in Girnār a loud commotion rang
'Some holy mendicant is here' The sage
Worked wonders with his lute and zither string
'Thy head I ask for, King', did Bijal sing

There came the second night
The Sultān summoned Bijal, told him 'Ne'er
Hath such as thou, Musician, ere come here
At thy pipe's tune, stands life from soul apart
Much wealth have I in goods, there's nought I lack
I'll give thee gifts that will delight thy heart
Come, worthy Sir, tune up let music start'

The third night came
When Bijal told the King this tale of song
'While generous men on earth are hundreds strong
Indeed, by some mind-fancy I was led
To thee, and to thy house am come instead'

The fourth night came
'Welcome, O welcome, Bard' the king did say,
'Not with uncounted wealth thy footsteps' way
Would I compare, if thou but happy be
Of rich abundant gifts take thou thy fill
These presents now I give thee there are more
Tomorrow I shall add to swell the store'

The fifth night came
Great wealth of silver did on Bijal pour
Came couches, cushions, palanquins and more,
Nine lakhs of money and nonillions o'er
But Bijal said 'The gifts are not for me,
O generous one The elephants take back
What first I asked for, give to me, thy head,
That thou to happiness itself be wed'

The sixth night came
The sage plucked strings and folk's attention drew
Within Girnār he sang the strong notes flew
Tomorrow (saith the Sayīd) thou'lt please the King,
Who will, Musician, thee to honour bring

III. THE KING AND THE MINSTREL (III)

King

' If on the scales an hundred heads I place
 To weigh the whole against thy music,
 The weight to that scale fails where Bijal sings
 Mine head's but empty bone-space
 There's no strength within it '

Minstrel

' Put in my robe what's tuned to music's strings :
 Send me not back. I came at earliest minute '

King

' Mine head, o'er thine, for thee I'd sacrifice
 O man of music, what thy worth convinces
 Thou get'st not from mine hands '

Minstrel

' This way, that way I searched and with mine eyes
 I looked on other princes
 Within my mind I fixed of other lands
 The princely givers, none within my reck
 Save thee endowed with will to yield his head '

King

' Welcome thou art, O man of music
 Thy meaning's drift I knew What thy tongue sped
 I comprehend completely, all thy words
 What falleth to the ground
 Be pleased to take '

Say'd

All three in tune were wed,
 The music's chords, the dagger and the neck.

King

' For no such prize, O man of music,
 Hast thou, ere this, made journey God be praised
 O man of music, that thou sought'st the head.'

Say'd

Fine instruments he took of cunning sound,
 The skilful master of music,
 And from the start in motion set the chords
 Before the kingly presence When he gazed
 Diāch at once saw clear
 And manifest the meaning's power

SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT

34

The singer drew the knife and plunged it deep
Within Dīāch's skull The flower
Of Gurnār's plucked and weep
The wailing women Hundreds like Sōrath
Stand up and moan The head, with crowning lock
Arranged, they give the man of music
And bitter is the wailing women's cry
'Last night the King did die'

III THE KING AND THE MINSTREL (IV)

Dīāch the King hath yielded up his head
(To God, to God a sacrifice)
And left his kingdom and the queens he wed
(To God, to God a sacrifice)
He found acceptance under Allāh's door,
(To God, to God a sacrifice)
His million-numbered needs fulfilled, told o'er
(To God, to God a sacrifice)
With bowstring-song his head the Singer sought,
(To God, to God a sacrifice)
His works, O sisters, to good endings wrought
(To God, to God a sacrifice)
Abdul Latif it is
Who makes these harmonies

IV THE WANDERERS

O mother, I saw the folk who saw
The man I love Nowise, no way
Can I describe them 'Tis their law
In rags and dust to pass along
They do not midst the foolish throng
Talk openly Perfection's spell
Binds them my lover's tale to tell
Their loins betimes Khāhōrīs girt,
And wandering off amongst the hills
One made themselves with earthy dirt
To torture they their bodies gave
Amidst the rocks they found their grave
On barren hill there stands a town
Of which to them the trace was known

in a river fight near Sehwan. Dārā was forced out of Gujrat to return once more this time up the river, and was captured on the borders of Sind, when he was delivered over to the imperial army by a Māhki Jiwān, chief holder of Bādar near the entrance to the Bolān Pass. Māhki Jiwān did not take the risk of sheltering him. Dārā was then brought back a captive to Bakhār and to the great disappointment of the defenders gave an order for the evacuation of the fortress. They had performed a very creditable feat of arms in holding it so long as Manucci's narrative clearly shows. Manucci tells us of the flight down the river from Multān to Bakhār and the siege of the fortress. Manucci says that Dārā's train consisted of five hundred and seven boats and that they were loaded with supplies of food requisite for a beleaguered citadel and eight cannons carrying shot of from 60 to 120 pounds besides light artillery, ammunition and other paraphernalia of war. Each boat, says Manucci carried more or less a hundred tons of cargo. Manucci went with a land force that struggled through the unkindly terrain of the river, suffering somewhat from failure of supplies and several times from want of water. We passed through several rough woods and arrived opposite the fortress of Bakhār in the middle of the treacherous river of Sind'. There he found the eunuch Primavera distributing the big guns and ammunition for the fortress. By Dārā's orders the fortress was garrisoned with two thousand selected men, the best he could get, Pathāns, Savids, Moghuls and Rājputs and twenty-two Europeans of different nationalities, and servants. Manucci begged Dārā to be allowed to accompany him, but Dārā directed him to remain in the fortress while he himself fled farther south. Manucci says 'I was overcome with tears and sighs at this parting, and seeing the downcast state in which I was quitting his presence he called me back. He then made me captain of the Europeans and ordered them to give me five thousand rupees to divide among my men and doubled my pay. It had been one hundred and fifty and he made it three hundred rupees. He gave me his word that if God made him King he would create me a noble of his court and reward my men in whose loyalty he had much confidence. He added the present of a serpaō (serāpa) and directed that I should receive a boat-load of Persian and Kābul wine'.¹ Dārā fled down the river collecting as many boats as he could to hinder pursuit of him by his enemies, and Bakhār was invested. 'We were shut up along with the loyal and valiant eunuch Primavera. No one could get out no one could enter. This fortress is in the middle of the mighty river Sindī (Indus), founded upon the live rock,

¹ *Cambridge Shorter History of India* p. 418

² *Serāpā Meṣer*, I, p. 318 3 *ibid.*, p. 319

stones from which could be used as flints for muskets In the middle was a cavalier (tower) overlooking both banks of the river '1 In the fort besides gold and silver, precious stones and a good deal of baggage, Dārā had left some ladies, among them the wife of Sulaimān Shukōh and his young sons, 'much cherished as being his grandsons' Dārā intended to keep Bakhar as a rallying point for later eventualities The incidents of the siege are vividly narrated The imperial troops turned on the fort two of the large cannons Dārā had left behind in the foundry at Lahore and these guns did considerable execution amongst the garrison because of the shortness of the range, a 'pistol shot on the west' and 'two musket shots on the east' The garrison, however, replied vigorously with their guns, dismounted the enemy artillery, made sallies, swarmed into the enemy trenches, bombarded the towns of Sukkur and Rōhrī and captured four field pieces and some baggage of the enemy '2 By this stout resistance the imperial army was nonplussed and resorted to stratagems to break the morale of the European gunners 'To this end they shot arrows to which letters were attached These invited us to abandon the service of Dārā and evacuate the place One of these arrows hit me on the shoulder while I was sitting in my bastion at eight o'clock at night Withdrawing the arrow I went with it at once, wounded as I was, to the eunuch He gave me a robe (sarāpa) and some bottles of rose water in recognition of my fidelity '3

The investing army had now been reinforced by the arrival of Khalilullāh Khān from Lahore, and fresh efforts were made to get the garrison to surrender Primavera was, however, made of sterner stuff 'He sent for me', says Manucci, 'and ordered me to load with horns and old shoes the cannon nearest the garden where Khalilullāh Khān was encamped It was charged thus up to the very muzzle' The eunuch then determined to answer Khalilullāh Khān's overtures thus 'I hold few words with you, for I am greatly annoyed at you, having been all your life a pimp and used to beatings from women Herewith what you deserve I offer you a present proportioned to your merits '4 The letter was ordered to be handed to Khalilullāh Khān and when it was being delivered to him 'he ordered us to fire off the cannon and we covered Khalilullāh Khān's tent with the charge it contained' This insult provoked further hostility and a fierce artillery bombardment of the fortress from the shore so that the shot fell all over the fortress and a pole that carried a small flag was pierced by three balls The garrison, however, could not be subdued and Khalilullāh

¹ *Storia do Mogor*, I, p 326

² *ibid*, p 327

³ *ibid*, p 350

⁴ *ibid*, p 352

Khān returned in disgust to Lahore. Forty days after his departure, however, troops were seen crossing the river from west to east and when the garrison began to fire at them a horseman appeared on the river boat with a white flag. The eunuch ordered him to be fetched across and when he came he was found to be carrying a message to say that Dārā was a prisoner in the hands of Aurangzēb's army. Even so the fort refused to surrender until Dārā himself ordered its evacuation. This Dārā did to save the garrison from famine and destruction and when Dārā's letter came to say 'Unfortunate in the one for whom you fought I now request and require you to deliver up the place',¹ a touching scene resulted. 'When the eunuch Primavera saw the letter he recognized the writing and began to weep bitterly. He wrote to Bahādur Khān (the enemy commander) that we demanded to come out with our baggage and if he did not consent we would fling the cannon and treasure into the river and fight to the death with all desperation. Bahādur Khān sent back an assurance that we could leave with our baggage but must make over the treasure, the princes and all the material appertaining to the fortress'. The end was in sight. 'After three days we issued from the fort in which we had endured so much. For two days before the evacuation I bought two calves for six hundred rupees and paid one rupee for every ounce of butter. Without exaggerating I bought one chicken for thirteen rupees'.² The safe conduct given to the gallant defenders did not avail the sturdy Primavera much, as he was killed shortly afterwards in Lahore, but he could hardly have expected gentler treatment there from Khalilullāh Khān, whose tent he had showered with shoes from a cannon at Bakhar. Dārā himself suffered the fate of one who was worsted by Aurangzēb in the fight for the throne of Shāh Jahān. The history books explain the circumstances of his judicial murder. Manucci tells us nothing of the social conditions in Sind as he was fully occupied with wars alone. But his narrative does depict vividly the nature of the Moghul fighting on the banks of the Indus.

(4) *Alexander Hamilton* (1699)³

Captain Alexander Hamilton was a Scot and a sort of merchant adventurer and traveller, a sea captain who, as he says himself, spent the years 1688-1723 in 'trading and travelling by sea and land to most of the countries and islands of commerce and navigation between the Cape of Good Hope and the Island of Japan'. For a seaman of those days he appears to have been uncommonly well educated. His *New Account of the East Indies*, published in

¹ *Storia do Mogor* I, pp 353-4.

² *ibid*, p 354.

³ The quotations from Hamilton are from Hamilton's *New Account of the East Indies* given in Pinkerton's *Travels* Vol VIII, pp 304-9.

Edinburgh in 1727 and dedicated to the Duke of Hamilton, is very well written and marked by a keen and intelligent observation of the numerous diverse sights he viewed in the course of his roving profession. He came to Lāribunder in 1699 with a cargo and proceeded to Tatta where he stayed a short time. He is the only European traveller whose narrative is actually contemporary with the life of Shāh Abdul Latif. When Captain Hamilton visited Lāribunder in 1699 Shāh Abdul Latif was a boy of about eight or nine years of age and the Kalhōra were beginning to assert themselves in Upper Sind. Hamilton's account of Lower Sind is confined to the neighbourhood of the port and the capital and shows how travelling in Sind was still an undertaking not to be lightly faced. There was very little security or safety and the countryside was infested by bands of robbers ready to attack the caravans that conveyed merchandise. While it is the fashion to decry the inefficiency of the Moghul Empire for its inability to secure the safety of wayfarers, it must not be forgotten that in England, France and Germany of the same period travel was still an adventure and that every traveller armed himself to resist the attacks of highwaymen. In fact the highwayman in England flourished until well into the wheeled vehicle era of the stage coach, which came into existence only when roads began to be good enough to stand up to wheeled traffic and people were prepared to travel regularly on business and pleasure many miles from the villages in which they lived and spent most of their lives.¹ Certainly at the end of the seventeenth century in England no man took a long road journey without expecting and often meeting with trouble. The first thing he did was to arm himself with a couple of heavy pistols with which to hold his own against the evil designs of miscreants who hoped to rob him of his portable property.

Hamilton found Lāribunder to be five or six leagues from the sea on a branch of the Indus and capable of accommodating ships of 200 tons. The place itself did not impress him. 'It is but a village of 100 houses built of crooked sticks and mud, but it has a large stone fort with four or five great guns mounted upon it to protect the merchandise brought thither from the robberies of the Balūchīs and Mekrāns (Mekrānīs) that lie near them to the westward, and the Jāms to the eastward who being borderers are much given to thieving and they rob all whom they are able to master.' The allusion to the Jāms shows that there had been little improvement in their behaviour since the time of

¹ For the condition of England in the eighteenth century see *Johnson's England* generally. For conditions in the end of the seventeenth century in England, see *The Age of Charles II*, by Bryant, *passim*.

Withington over eighty years earlier, and that the later Moghul empire in Sind was no better than the early one in preserving law and order. Hamilton found that the robbers had protection in the swampy nature of the land on the Indus delta and the rapid tides of the river, which made pursuit of marauders difficult. It was the practice to protect the camel caravans (kāfilas) with a guard of one hundred to two hundred horses, but these guards were still in 1699 as unreliable as the guards paid by Withington in 1613 for safe conduct. Hamilton writes, 'But often these protectors suffer the cāfilas to be robbed, pretending the robbers are too numerous to be restrained by their small force and afterwards come in shares with the robbers'. In 1699 Hamilton mentions the robbing of a kāfila by four or five thousand 'villains' who cut off the guard of 250 horse and 500 of the merchants and carriers. It will thus be evident that both the caravans and the robberies were on a very magnificent scale.

Tatta is described as 'the emporium of the province, a very large and rich city'. It is about three miles long and one and a half broad and is 40 miles distance from Lāribunder and has a large citadel on its west end capable to lodge 5000 men and horse and has barracks and stables convenient for them with a palace built in it for the nabob¹ (Nawāb—Governor). All merchandise between Lāribunder and Tatta was conveyed by pack animals, there were no carts engaged on this business, the nature of the country with its covering of bushes and scrub combined with its marshy character making road and wheeled traffic very difficult. The French traveller Thévenot (1667), who never visited Sind but is generally accounted an accurate and reliable observer, says that 'the finest palanquins that are in all Indostān are made at Tatta and there is nothing neater than the chariots with two wheels which are made for travelling'². He speaks also of wagons, for carrying goods, with solid wheels but no spokes and drawn by eight or ten oxen. A merchant conveying anything of consequence ought to have 'four soldiers or four peons' by the sides of the wagon. Thévenot says that caravans commonly consisted of above two hundred wagons. The conflict of evidence is interesting but Hamilton as the eye witness is entitled to greater credence. The vehicles described by Thévenot are, however, plainly the country bullock carts still prevalent in parts of Sind with solid wheels which creak abominably, and the use of trailer bullocks in sandy parts is still practised. It is, however, possible that Thévenot has ascribed to Tatta and Diūl (Lāribunder) the conditions prevailing in northern Gujārāt, where

¹ For Manucci's account see *Storia do Mogor*, II, pp. 186, 414, 427.

² Thévenot, III, p. 53.

carts largely replace camels and long trains of bullock carts are still a common feature of transport today

Hamilton came to Lāribunder with a cargo from Malabār which he says was worth over ten thousand pounds. The insecurity of the country between the port and the capital, however, was such that no Indian merchants would deal with him till the goods were brought to Tatta, though they were agreeable to pay the rates that Hamilton was asking. Hamilton was, therefore, forced to go on a kāfila and take his goods to Tatta himself. The kāfila he travelled in was a large one 'of 1500 beasts and as many more men and women, besides 200 horse for our guard'. The presence of this big private force did not, however, ensure safety as servants brought news after the caravan had gone sixteen miles that the Balūchīs and Mekrānīs were out in large numbers. When the robbers threatened Hamilton called in the services of two of his expert seamen shots. 'I had two of my seamen that shot as well with a fuzee as any ever I saw, for I have seen them at sea for diversion knock down a single sea fowl with a single bullet as they were flying near the ship. I ordered one to knock down the herald, which he instantly did by a bullet through his head. Another came presently after with the same threatenings and met with the same treatment'. This drastic measure was, however, successful, and the caravan passed safely to a sort of half-way house, or serai, a 'mud wall fort called Dungham, a very proper English name for such a fortification'. The word seems to disguise some such name as Dhingan or Dangan (jō gōth), but is now unidentifiable. Captain Hamilton's remark hints at the insanitary condition in which these resting places must have been maintained. Indeed it was camping grounds and old inhabited sites which were the chief source of supply of saltpetre in those days, the mineral being removed by the refinement of the manure-laden soil. This place was the regular stage to Tatta and the seventeenth century equivalent of the traveller's halt. It was built midway between Tatta and Lāribunder to secure the kāfila from being set upon at night, 'who all lodge within it, men and beasts promiscuously, which makes it so nasty that the English appellation is rightly bestowed upon it. There are about twenty little cottages built close to it and the residents breed fowls, goats and sheep to sell to passengers and these are all the houses to be seen between Tatta and Lāribunder'.

Manucci describes the serais in the more settled parts of the Moghul Empire.¹ 'They are like fortified places with their bastions and strong gates, most of them are built of stone or of brick. In

¹ Irvine *A Peep of Moghul India*, p. 34. Abridged from Manucci *Storia do Mogor*.

every one is an official whose duty it is to close the gates at the going down of the sun. After he has shut the gates he calls out that everyone must look after his belongings, picket his horses by the fore and hind legs, above all that he must look out for dogs, for the dogs of Hindustān are very cunning and great thieves. At six o'clock in the morning before opening the gates the watchman gives three warnings to the travellers crying in a loud voice that everyone must look after his own things. After these warnings, if anyone suspects that any of his property is missing the doors are not opened till the lost thing is found. These serais are only intended for travellers (soldiers do not go into them). Each one of them might hold more or less from 800 to 1000 persons with their horses, camels, carriages and some of them are even larger. The serai at 'Dungham' was clearly something of this kind and placed on the main trade route. Hamilton says nothing, however, about a watchman or measures to prevent the travellers from stealing each other's property.

In Tatta Hamilton was impressed by the splendour of his lodging, 'a large convenient house of fifteen rooms with good warehouses. The stairs from the street were entire porphyry of ten feet long, of a bright yellow colour and as smooth as glass. They were about ten in number and led up to a square of fifteen yards long and about ten broad'. The Governor of Tatta at that time was encamped about six miles from the town in command of an army of eight or ten thousand men intending to punish the robbers of the caravans. He showed great civility to Hamilton, sending him a present of 'an ox, five sheep, as many goats, twenty fowls and fifty pigeons with sweetmeats and fruits in abundance. He desired me to let him know when we designed to drink a dish of coffee with him and he would send horses to bring us to the camp'.

Hamilton accepted this invitation and took as a present to the Governor 'a looking glass of about five pounds in value, a gun, a pair of pistols well gilded, a sabre blade and dagger blade gilded and a glass knife for his tobacco and an embroidered standish (stand dish) for it to stand on'. The Governor was most polite and granted Hamilton freedom of customs duty and other charges on his goods and also gave him the right, if he did not receive proper payment, to imprison the debtors instead of having to send them to the Kāzi's court. He also said that if the purchasers did not pay he would sell their wives, children or nearest relations to make good the debt. 'This privilege', says Hamilton, 'did me singular service when the time of payment came'.

Hamilton was much impressed with the boats that sailed on the Indus. 'Their vessels are called Kisties of several sizes. The

largest can lade about 200 tons. They are flat bottomed and on each side cabins are built from stem to stem that overhang about two feet, and in each cabin is a kitchen and a place of exoneration which falls directly in the water' (a characteristic still of the Indus river boats). 'These cabins are hired out to passengers and the hold, being made into separate apartments, are let out to freighters so that every one has a lock on his cabin and apartment in the hold and has his goods always ready to dispose on at what places he finds his market, and indeed in all my travels I never saw better conveniences of travelling by water.'

Hamilton's account of the trade of the town, the fertility of the fields and the cheapness of food and abundance of supplies will be dealt with more appropriately in another portion of this book. He mentions the Portuguese church, then deserted—doubtless the building about which Father Manrique had been so anxious half a century earlier. 'The Portuguese had formerly a church at the east end of the city. The house is still entire and in the vestry are some old pictures of saints and some holy vestments which they proffered to sell, but I was no merchant for such bargains.'

The picture thus vividly portrayed brings clearly before our eyes the Moghul Empire in Sind at the end of the seventeenth century. We can envisage the lawlessness in the countryside, the absolute autocracy of the Governor with his power over customs and administration of justice, the thriving river trade and the elegances of life in the town itself. Tatta was by far the wealthiest town in Sind in these days and the country round it was the centre of a thriving agriculture. Hamilton knew nothing of conditions in middle and upper Sind, but he proves that near the centre of government the Moghul administration was, within its limits, not lacking in practical efficiency. It did not have to worry about equal justice between man and man, or concern itself with the sorrows of the poor. That kind of conscience is reserved for governments of a later day when education is more widespread, when there is more general wealth and a wider margin exists for providing the conveniences, luxuries and elegances of life.

VI *Trading conditions in Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*

(a) *The conveniences of trade*

The Moghul Empire was an autocracy directed to supplying the needs of the Imperial Court and the military force by which it was enabled to maintain its conquest over a vast area ruled by almost independent local chiefs. The demands of the Imperial Court on the economic resources of the country were immense. The

Moghul dominions were always everywhere being harried by war and oppressed by the demands of military forces. Public order was but inadequately enforced. In these circumstances trade and industry were not likely to flourish well. Communications were poor. The villages were isolated. Capital was not easily available. The small craftsman working independently for himself was the chief source of production. An elaborate system of taxation impinged on every part of the business of manufacture, distribution and sale, with profession taxes, transit dues, customs and imposts on retail sales. The larger towns, about which we hear in the records of travellers, were the seats of the wealthy and the emporia of such merchandise as could be easily transported and sold. The glowing accounts of such cities as Ahmedabad, Lahore, Agra, Delhi, Tatta and Surat did not apply to the villages where the bulk of the population lived on a bare subsistence level. The statement of Bernier, however, is exaggerated. 'Even a considerable proportion of the good land remains untilld for want of labourers, many of whom perish in consequence of the bad treatment they experience from the governors. The poor people when incapable of discharging the demands of their rapacious lords are not only deprived of the means of subsistence but are bereft of their children who are carried away as slaves.' Bernier is clearly here generalizing unwisely from some act of tyranny by which his feelings had been revolted. A truer picture is given by Mr Findlay Shirras when he writes: 'Agriculture was always the main industry of the country and this was supplemented by cottage industries which had attained great perfection in certain parts of the country, notably in the muslins of Dacca and the brocades of Ahmedabad. In pre-British India communications were so bad that, except for the Ganges and the Indus, or the roads from Agra to Lahore and to the west coast, there were no channels of communication and hence it was impossible for India to be a commercial country. Had there been easy communications there would have been large markets for the production of cottage industries. Production must, therefore, have been limited in these land-locked areas.'

When the age of the English and other foreign traders arrived markets began to develop and trade routes were improved. The efforts of the foreign traders did actually stimulate the production of cottage industries of India, as a result of which much wealth was poured into the country. The cotton² industry

¹ G. Findlay Shirras, *Poverty and Kindred Problems in India*, p. 33.

² Europe produced linen for domestic use and tapestry for decoration earlier our chintzes could not compete with these goods on their merits and could secure a market only by offering an advantage in point of price and this offer was not possible until they were brought all the way to Europe by sea. The possibilities of the situation were realized mainly through the activities of the English Company. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 123.

was the first to profit thereby. The emphasis of many Indian writers is on painting a very black picture of this phenomenon. The picture is not only black. It is also untrue to facts, as judicious and fair-minded writers like Sarkar have made perfectly clear. The foreign traders sought to gain profit for themselves and did so, but their operations were in no sense a drain on the wealth of India because they drew their main profits from the sale in Europe of Indian cotton goods which, but for them, would never have been produced in such bulk. As Indian cotton goods were then a complete novelty in Western Europe, the foreign trader made large profits on the sales in the home markets, but he paid reasonably adequate prices to the weavers in India. Furthermore, the foreign traders were also competing amongst themselves for the sea carrying trade and freight charges were cut to ensure their obtaining the goods to carry. Had these ships not been available the goods would certainly not have been transported in the quantities in which they were. These trading operations were paid for in gold and silver which India began to absorb in enormous quantities in return for the labour and skill of Indian artisans and merchants. Thus in no sense did the foreign trade of the English and Dutch (the Portuguese had ceased to count as effective competitors) mean any drain on the wealth of India or the impoverishment of her people, as so many Indian economic writers continue to assert without any evidence whatever. The cardinal fact is that India had the practical monopoly of the supply of cotton goods for nearly a hundred years. The products of Indian looms were eagerly sought for in the markets of the West till well on into the eighteenth century. After that period the situation changed radically. The cotton industry of Europe had by that time found its feet and had begun to supplant Indian manufacture. This happened before the time of the industrial revolution in Britain with its power-looms, its factories, its vast increase of skill in the technique of production and its multiplicity and improvement of patterns. India could in no circumstances have expected to maintain after 1760 the position of privilege it occupied from 1600 to 1750. I think that Farūkī¹ is undoubtedly correct in his view that the works of Moreland paint too gloomy a picture of the social conditions of India during the reign of the great Moghuls from Akbar to Aurangzēb, as his views are coloured by the belief that the Indian population was utterly downtrodden, harried and tyrannized over by the autocracy of the government, which left them nothing but a bare pittance. Moreland tends to underestimate the fact that India has always been a poor country, that the common man has been content with a lesser

¹ *Aurangzēb and His Times*, p. 502

material standard of comfort than the European and that the vast majority of the population has never been accustomed to high standards of living. In fact there has always been a distinct school of thought in India (and this school of thought is alive today, led by no less influential a person than Mr Gāndhī himself) which believes that the strength of Indian civilization lies in its power to dispense with needless luxuries or elaborate comforts. The Hindu has usually been characterized by a very frugal expenditure on creature comforts. This point was put very well by Ovington¹ when he said, 'Sumptuousness and state suit not very well with the life and conditions of a Bannian. This keeps our brokers at Surat who are bannians from all costly disbursements though they are reckoned by some to be worth 15, by others 30 lakhs of roupies.' Indeed the poetry of the modern Hindu poet Tagore preaches the same lesson of frugal simplicity in beautiful and dignified language. It is impossible, as Vincent Smith has shown, to make very much of the amazing jumble of statistical material in the Āin-i-Akbarī. I have studied the statistics for Sind given in the Āin² and can find very little of value in them. They offer no reliable guide to the social condition of the time, and they are maddeningly vague just where the historian desires them to be precise. As Vincent Smith³ says, 'All subjects are considered solely with reference to the sovereign and the court and little or no attempt is made to compare the conditions under Akbar with those existing under his predecessors.'

It will be evident then that Sind with its internal waterway system of the Indus, its easy connexion with Lahore and Multān, two very flourishing towns at this period of India's history, its thriving cotton industry, and its vast emporium at Tatta with its busy port at Lāribunder,⁴ was soon envisaged as a profitable centre of trade with Europe.

Let us now examine trading conditions in Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Indus was the chief means of communication between Lahore⁵ and Tatta⁶ and almost all the

¹ Ovington *A Voyage to Surat* p. 188

² For reference to Sind in the Āin see especially III pp. 336-9

³ Vincent Smith *Akbar the Great Moghul* p. 386

⁴ Lāribunder was the Dēbal of earlier days. The Khalāsat-ut-Tawārīkh says 'Dēbal is a great place for pearls and other valuable commodities and it has salt and iron mines which pay a considerable revenue to the government. About 4000 vessels and boats belong to the port of Dēbal.' Quoted in Raverty *The Mahrān of Sind* op cit., p. 469

⁵ For a description of Lahore see Montserrat pp. 159-60

⁶ For Tatta see Hamilton

In the Āin-i-Akbarī, II, p. 338 it is stated that no less than 40,000 boats of all kinds could be found in the sarkār of Tatta (probably a gross exaggeration). For route between Ahmedābād and Tatta see De Laet pp. 67-8

important cotton manufacturing places were on the river or within easy reach of it—Bakhar, Rōhrī, Darbēlo, Gambat, Kandīāro, Sehwan, Sann, Nasarpūr and Tatta. There was an excellent system of river transport which aroused the enthusiastic praise of Hamilton in 1699. Apart from the river, there were trade routes by land between Tatta and Ahmedābād¹—the route followed by Withington in 1613—and from Tatta to Pāli and Jaisalmīr. There was a trade route from Bakhar to Afghānistān and Persia frequented by large kāfilas of laden camels that had regular seasons for travel which avoided the worst of the hot weather and inundation in Upper Sind and the intense winter cold of the highlands of Balūchistān and Persia. These kāfilas consisted of hundreds of camels accompanied by an army of traders and guards. In Sind itself transport was all by pack animals, mostly camels, which are well suited to the terrain. Wheeled traffic was practically unknown and it is doubtful if bullock carts were used much except in the environs of the various emporia². The oriental system of markets and fairs on saints' days at saints' tombs was well established and the *Gazetteer*³ of Sind gives a long list of places where such fairs were held on regular days every year. In fact in this respect Sind's commerce was on the old medieval system which had prevailed in England itself up to the time of the rise of the trading towns and the growth of the merchant guilds.

At Lāribunder on the Indus Sind possessed a port which accommodated vessels up to 200 and 300 tons burden—big ships for those days—and the trade arrangements were sufficiently good to earn the praise of the English merchants of the East India Company in 1636. By the middle of the seventeenth century Lāribunder was falling in importance because of the siltation of the river, a matter which aroused the interest of Aurangzēb when he was Governor of Multān in 1648-52⁴. By his efforts a new port was constructed nearby and called Aurangabunder. Though it was never wholly successful it served its day and turn and later developed into an inferior sub-port of Shāhbunder, which became important in the eighteenth century. From Lāribunder, Aurangabunder, Vasta (probably Wastī) bunder and Shāhbunder a coastal trade flourished chiefly with the Persian Gulf.

¹ For a description of Ahmedābād see Mandelslo

² Del Hoste, 1832. Carts are used about Khairpūr, they are generally speaking badly constructed and principally used in bringing wood from the jungle. I saw two or three good carts but they belonged to the Amīrs p. 42

³ See *Gazetteer of Sind* by Hughes

⁴ See Tavernier and *Storia do Mogor*, I, p. 12

See also Thévenot and Bombay Diaries on the same point. Thévenot quoted in Raverty, p. 349

See Sarkar *History of Aurangzēb*, Vol. I, pp. 114-25

ports of Basra, Gombroon (Bunder Abbās), Muscat, Congo (Kancūn) and Bahrein, and with the Gujirāt ports of Cambay and Surat. The trade was in the hands of Muhammadans. The English and Dutch made strenuous efforts to share the business with them—a task in which they were fairly successful thanks to the better quality of their ships, the reliable nature of their crews, and also to their greater security when attacked by the Gulf and Kāthiawāri pirates who flourished wherever there was a chance of loot. Ships sailed for more distant ports as well, especially Goa and the Malabar coastal ports. In its day the Indus delta must have presented a sight of busy commerce such as it does not show now.

The distance of Tatta from the port was always regarded as troublesome because the forty miles between the towns were over bad and barren country (as described by Hamilton) and kāfilas were liable to be set upon and attacked by robbers, either Balūchis or the men of the Lower Sind Jāms (probably Sindhis of the Sammo tribe or Mindhros, Jats and Mōhānos living in the deltaic region). The Tārīkh-i-Tāhūrī gives an interesting illustration of the port methods prevailing at Lāribunder when a ship was sighted at the bar. 'Whenever a ship enters the creek between Lāribunder and the ocean it intimates its approach by firing a gun which is responded to by the Guard house in order by that signal to inform the people at the port of the arrival of a strange vessel. These again instantly send word of its arrival to the merchants of Tatta and then embarking on boats repair to the place where the guard is posted. Ere they reach it those on the look-out have already enquired into the nature of the ship. Every vessel and every trader must undergo this questioning. All concerned in the business now go to their boats (ghrābs) to the mouth of the creek. If a ship belong to the port it is allowed to move up and anchor under Lāribunder; if it belong to some other port it can go no farther, its cargo is transferred to boats and forwarded to the city.'¹

The distance between Lāribunder and Tatta was a constant cause of trouble in other ways. Tavernier records an interesting incident connected with a trip an English Captain was making between the port and the metropolis. 'The King has conceded to the English captains that they shall not be searched when they leave their vessels to come on shore. But one day an English captain going to Tatta, one of the largest towns in India, a little above Sindh, which is at the mouth of the river Indus, when about to pass was arrested by the customs guard from whom he could not defend himself and who searched him in spite of anything he could say. They found gold on him, he having already conveyed some in sundry journeys between the vessel and the town. He was let off

¹ Elliot I p 277.

on payment of the ordinary duty¹ Evidently the customs guard must have thought that the Captain was making a habit of dealing in gold exchange, which he had no right to do The usual practice was to deprive carriers of gold of their coin and pay its alleged equivalent value in local coins, in which it may be presumed the exchange was always against the importer Apparently the Captain on this occasion was found out, as the freedom from search could hardly have been expected to cover import of gold for private profit in Tatta

From these and other contemporary records it may be gathered that trade in Sind was on a very well-organized basis, both in respect of land and water journeys², the business was soundly established and the government supervision very thorough The difficulties which traders had to face were those common to the India of that day, vexatious imposts and delays, dangers from pirates and robbers, and poverty of road communication The actual handling of goods was done by brokers, agents and dalāls, who were mostly Hindus and who probably managed to amass considerable wealth, though it was fatal to display any kind of opulence lest the capricious covetousness of the local officials should devise some method of confiscating it or levying a disproportionate penalty upon it This in itself would afford sufficient reason for the 'bannians' not displaying any of the 'sumptuousness and state' which, as Ovington noted, they lacked

(b) *The industries and commerce of Sind*

Postans has given an account of the chief articles of Sind's trade about the time of the British annexation By that time trade had been reorientated Karāchi, Hyderābād and Shikārpūr had all become important towns and Sukkur was beginning to show signs of progress In the main, however, Postans' lists are accurate enough for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries if the cardinal fact of the decline in the importance of the cotton industry, explained in the previous section, is borne in mind Sind had then for nearly a hundred years ceased to be a source of supply of cottons for the European market Tatta had declined and with Tatta had gone the fine chintzes and calicoes But the cotton weaving still continued to satisfy the demand of a much smaller and more local

¹ Tavernier, I, p 10

² For number of boats on the Indus in the days of the Tālpūrs see Pottinger 'In our voyage from Hyderābād to Rāja ka Dēra we counted three hundred and forty-one boats in nineteen days and on our return we saw in four days a greater number in proportion to the time I was assured by a Hindu merchant that five hundred boats could be assembled for hire at Bakhar in a week' *Memoir of Sindh*, p 247

market. In fact Sindh was an importer of English clothes and calicoes instead of exporting them.¹ The articles of export were English piece goods, velvet, woollen cloth, silks and metals—mostly from Bombay, cotton goods, cloths and blankets from Mārwar and Gujārāt, silk from the Punjab, Patwarpūr and Multān, dyes or green dunnies from the North West. The exports from Sindh of its own production were fish, cotton, indigo and fish and leather. With Khorāsān there was a sort of special trade, controlled by the Shikārpūrī Hindus. Sindh exported indigo, coarse cotton cloths, silk manufactured goods, salt and saltpetre and received Khorāsān goods in exchange. The principal trade between Upper and Lower Sindh took the form of Upper Sindh supplying Lower Sindh with dry grains (i.e. other than rice), ghani cotton and indigo and receiving in return the fish, manufactured leather and arms. This was the condition of trade after half a century of Tālpūr rule during which the chief object had been to shut Sindh off from the outside world. The trade of Sindh with Mārwar, Jaisalmer, Bahāwalpūr, Punjab, Gujārāt was of minor importance. During the days of the Moghul and Kālhōro rule, in the main, items of trade were the same except that the great business of Shikārpūr with Khorāsān had not developed and that arms, the products of Hyderābād, did not figure in the lists of the articles of commerce.

During Moghul and Kālhōro times the chief industries were the manufacture of cotton goods, saltpetre and indigo, leather and fish. These apart, Moreland's description of trade and commerce in Moghul days² is true of Sindh. Flour milling as an industry did not exist. Everyone ground his own flour in his own jandri (grinding mill) such as any traveller in Sindh can see at work today. Oil pressing was another village industry, widely diffused, the camels and bullocks turning the ghāns (oil presses), crushing the jūmbho and rape seed just as they do today. The potter's craft was equally primitive and can still be seen in Sindh exactly as it was in Moghul and Kālhōro days. The making of glazed tiles was, however, highly skilful and the products were used to ornament tombs and mosques. Building was unimportant as most of the houses and habitations were made of mud, sticks, grass or branches of trees. Only in the largest towns like Tatta and for the tombs of holy men was the use of brick and stone much indulged in. The climate was so dry that mud houses lasted for a generation and the poorer classes, just as they do today, lived in shacks and huts built of the cheapest material available. Sindh is deficient in building stone. It is, therefore, useless looking in it for masterpieces of the mason's art. Apart from

¹ Postans, *Persian's Occasions of Sind*, pp. 204-5.

² Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, chapter V.

cotton spinning and weaving, the finishing of leather goods, the production of saltpetre and indigo, and the drying of fish, Sind deserves little special notice industrially. These industries, however, are sufficiently important to merit special notice because they attracted the attention of the English traders and travellers to the country.

(1) *The cotton industry in Sind*

The references to this in the East India Company records are voluminous and many of them have already been quoted. Joseph Salbank, who travelled through Persia and Turkey in 1609, says. 'Rōree' is a town of husbandmen and painful people who deal also in merchandise, as cotton cloth, indigo and other commodities and are a peaceable people to deal with all'. He adds, 'on the river pass barks of fortie and fifty tounes by means of which there is traffique into divers parts of India'. Of Sukkur (which he took mistakenly for Bakhar) he notes that it 'consisteth most of weavers and diers which serve the country round about'.² Moreland³ says that the production of cotton goods for export was in the main drawn from four tracts—the Indus plain with its outlet at the port of Lāribunder, the country round the Gulf of Cambay and as far south as Dābul (Dābhol), the Coromandel coast and Bengal. There were large communities of weavers at Lahore, Multān, Sukkur, Tatta and other towns on the rivers of the Indus system, and much of this produce was exported by sea, some going towards Arabia and the rest being taken at this period by the Portuguese. Tatta and Nasarpūr were the main centres of the industry in Sind. Tatta was, throughout the seventeenth century, particularly remarkable for the excellence of its products. Manucci⁴ says 'Tattah abounds in very fine white cloth, also in coarse cloth, and printed cloth of two kinds and has much leather which is exported' to Arabia and Persia'. Withington⁵ notes 'Concerning Sinde no city is by general report of greater trade in the Indies than Tatta, the chief port of Lowri bunder three days journey from it, a fair road (roadstead) without the river's mouth clear of worms. There are other commodities, bāftas, stuffs, lawns (fine cotton goods and muslins), indigo, coarse not so good as Bayāna'. Thévenot⁶ writes 'It is a country of great traffic and especially the town of Tatta where the Indian merchants buy a great many curiosities made by the inhabitants who are wonderfully ingenious in all kinds of arts. The Indus makes a great many little islands towards

¹ Quoted in Raverty *The Mīhrān of Sind*, p. 494.

² *ibid.*, p. 495.

³ Moreland *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 182.

⁴ Manucci *Storia del Mogor*, II, p. 427.

⁵ Withington *Early Travels in India* pp. 217-18.

⁶ Thévenot pp. 175-6.

Tatta, and these islands being fruitful and pleasant make it one of the most commodious towns of the India though it be exceeding hot there' Hamilton gives a still more detailed account. After recounting the productions of this and the inland country is saltpetre, sal ammoniac, borax, opoponax, assafoetida, lost borax, lapis lazuli and lapis lazuli and raw silk, he continues 'They manufacture in wrought silks which they call jemīwāns, in cotton and silk called cuttinees, and in silk mixed with Carmanra wool, in calicoes, coarse and fine, sheer and close wrought. Their cloth called Jūrries is very fine and soft and lasts beyond all other cotton that I have used. They make chints very fine and cheap and coverlets for beds very beautiful'. Hamilton also states that three years before his arrival (i.e. in 1666) plague caused by the absence of rain carried off 80,000 people (from Tatta and the neighbourhood) who manufactured cotton and silk and above one half of the city was deserted and left empty.

Tatta was still an important place in the days of the second English factory (1758-75), but it was already beginning to decline because trade was taking other channels with the rise of Karāchi, Hyderābād and Shikārpūr, the silting up of the river mouth at Shāhbunder, and the decline in demand for Tatta and Sind goods caused by Britain's being able then not only to supply herself but to export cotton goods abroad. These causes, and not the incompetence of the Kalhōra and Tālpūrs as rulers, so naïvely assumed by persons of Postans' or Burton's ways of thinking, were responsible for the decay of the once great metropolis.² This decay was so complete as to make a European traveller in 1842 remark 'The streets are narrow, irregular and very dirty. The houses which are built of clay, wood and brick, resemble square towers with flat roofs, on which the inhabitants are accustomed to sleep in the open air during the warm nights. Cakes of dung used for firing are piled against the walls. There are only a few mosques in the place which are built of stone and painted white, but they have the same dirty and ruinous appearance as the town, and there are no traces of the extensive trade which formerly was carried on. Poverty and dirt everywhere prevail'.³ By this time Karāchi was an important port. Hyderābād had a population of 35,000 and Shikārpūr was the centre of an indigenous banking

¹ He mentions also the lacquering of wood (still carried on) inlaying of cabinets and the putting up of butter in large jars called 'dūppas' made of the hides of cattle with a neck and mouth on one side of all sizes to hold quantities of butter from 5 to 320 pounds, so that the butter kept the whole year round without salt.

² Pinkerton VII pp 304-9

³ This view is expressed also by Burnes

⁴ Captain Leopold von Orlich *Travels in India* pp 103-4

made from it should be used against a Muslim power,¹ but the policy in this respect was altered with the transfer of Aurangzīb to another administrative charge. He does not seem to have followed this policy when he became Governor of Multān and issued a had authority over the territory of Tatta then supplying saltpetre to the East India Company at Lāribunder. The trade, however, did not become of first-rate moment till after 1650 when Bihār was developed as the chief source of supply. Till 1650 saltpetre could not compete with more highly priced goods like cotton, colours and indigo and was shipped largely loose among the baled goods as 'lintage' but after 1650 it became valuable on its own account.

The Sind factory in the eighteenth century was very anxious to obtain from Sind all the saltpetre it could get. The supply from Sind was never more than a useful auxiliary of the main supply obtained from Bengal and Bihār. We have already seen that there was difficulty about coppers for refining the crude saltpetre and that artificers could not be procured in Sind to make coppers as satisfactory as the imported ones. The difficulty about repairing was common all over India owing to the technical deficiencies of the Indian coppersmiths for such work. Moreland says 'Apart from official interference the only difficulty affecting the trade seems to have been the supply of suitable vessels for the refineries. The commodity was in any case bulky and needed refining in order to remove the impurities, but the Indian methods of evaporation, in which earthen vessels were used, were found to be unsatisfactory and appliances made of copper could not be obtained locally'.² Sind was used to supplement other sources of supply like the Coromandel coast, Gujārāt and Āgra, and then later Orissa and Hūgli. The business flourished to a moderate extent, as we know from the factory letters, for it was necessary to increase the number of coppers and enlarge the saltpetre warehouse at Shāhbunder. The resources of Sind were, however, running low towards the end of the second factory's days, as we learn from Crowe.³ Writing in 1799 he states 'There are many salt petre grounds in the different parts of the country but mostly in the delta particularly about Shāhbunder and Aurangabunder. Those in the vicinity of Tatta were exhausted and the nearest are at Sācra Purgunnah (Mīrpūr Sākro), about thirty miles distant. The Honourable Company had extensive works under their former establishment at Shāh Bunder for purifying and crystallizing this article which is now imported in Bombay at a much cheaper rate from Bengal'. In the seventeenth century saltpetre was important as a main ingredient for the manufacture of gunpowder, but in the

¹ Moreland *From Akbar to Aurangzīb* p. 122

² Moreland *ibid*

³ Crowe *op cit*

eighteenth century its usefulness had extended to other and more peaceful operations, such as glass making, the sizing of cloth and the making of dyes. It is to be assumed that much of the considerable profit the Company made in the eighteenth century in virtue of their monopolistic control of this article was due to the demand for it by the growing cotton manufacturing industry of Britain and to the rise of the modern manufacture of glass and artistic earthenware in the 'Potteries'

(3) *Indigo*

Indigo receives considerable mention in the days of the first Sind factory but was of no importance in the days of the second.¹ The first English factors spent time and trouble and much money in locating sources of indigo supply in Sind. Some of the factors stayed in the indigo producing areas to encourage the growing of the crop. But Sind was never very important as a source of supply, despite all the efforts made.² Indigo growing was concentrated mostly in Middle Sind—the territory of Sehwan, Bubak and Sann, and Sehwan itself were the chief areas of production. The quality was, however, inferior and the factors were always complaining of the indigo's being adulterated with sand and other ingredients to increase the weight. Sind was never able to compete with Gujārāt, where Sarkhēj was the great centre of production, or Bayāna, fifty miles from Āgra. The Indian indigo, says Bāl Krishna, 'began to lose its ground in the English market about 1650. Nine years later we find that such abundant quantities had been imported from the Barbadoes and the West Indies that indigo was not required from India unless the Lahore³ variety could be bought at 18d, and the Ahmedābād one at 9d per pound, but the former was invoiced at 12½d per pound at Surat in 1660. Fortunately the demand for indigo was specially increasing in the dyeing and manufacturing industries of England and therefore large quantities continued to be imported from India up to the end of that century.'⁴

¹ On account of the West Indies having appeared as a supplier of indigo to the detriment of the Indian trade.

² There are references to this in the Company's letters, *passim*.

³ i.e. produced at Bayāna but exported through Lahore. See Moreland *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 109. Lahōri commanded the higher price in Europe but it cost more to put on the market and the variation in Indian prices was the principal factor in determining the quantity of each brand to be exported in any particular year' *op cit*, p. 110.

⁴ *Commercial Relations between India and England (1601-1757)* p. 155. The indigo produced at Bayāna was more popular because it was adapted to overland transport, and was purer than the Sarkhēj variety which was in the form of cakes, called 'feat' and adulterated with a mixture of sand which made three pounds of Sarkhēj equal to two pounds of Lahōri. Sind dealers obviously copied the trading methods of the Gujārāt producers and mixed their indigo with sand.

(4) *Leather and leather-work*

Many contemporary writers have remarked on the excellence of Sind leather and the importance of it as an article of trade. Sind has always been a land with large numbers of buffaloes and oxen and the export of cattle from Sind was a matter to which the English factors in the eighteenth century were told to pay attention. Several of the Company's invoices of this period mention the transport of cattle to Bombay. Thus Sind had always, as it still has, a plentiful supply of hides and much raw material for the leather industry. Sind saddlery and ornamental leather-work for camels' upholstery and for coverlets were famous. The business was, however, mostly in the hands of the native traders and the East India Company were not greatly interested in it. Hamilton mentions the leather butter jars capable of holding butter up to 320 pounds and keeping it fresh for a year. Withington speaks of the Sind shields and bucklers which were of superior quality. 'Their buckler is made very great in the fashion of a beehive, wherein when occasion serves they will give their camels drink or their horses provender'. Linschoten says 'The people of Sind make excellent and fair leather and cunningly wrought with silk of all colours, both flowers and personages, this leather in India is much esteemed to lay upon beds and tables instead of carpets'.¹ Manucci also remarks that Sind 'has much leather which is exported to Arabia and Persia'. The Sind tanners were distinguished by their special skill, a skill that is not yet dead, and even so late as 1842 a European traveller noted approvingly the technique of the Sind village tanners. 'As soon as the hide is properly tanned and oiled it is dried in the shade. The leather of Sind is some of the best in India and not inferior in softness and durability to that of Europe'.² Sarkar³ has also remarked that, with the Punjab, Sind was the home of the leather industry. The camel and horse trappings were finely made and artistically decorated as described by Linschoten, and no one familiar with modern Sind needs to be told that the finely wrought camel coverings and horse adornments seen on the mounts of any well-to-do zemindār today are in the direct line of the industry which performed so useful a service for the country in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In fact, in face of all the evidence it is impossible to accept as a true account of the situation the observations of Moreland. These are based on the view that the export of hides on an extensive scale is a modern phenomenon, that few of the foreign observers say anything about the common people wearing

¹ Linschoten *Voyage to East Indies*, I, p. 56

² Von Orlich *Travels in India* p. 101

³ Sarkar *Mughul Administration* (Second Series), pp. 71-81

shoes, and that the saddlery of Moghul times was composed to a great extent of ropes and cloth and did not use leather in the European fashion. Most foreign observers write of the typically Hindu parts of India, where the bovine animals are held in superstitious veneration, trade in hides is regarded as something dishonourable, the tanner is a despised and down-trodden creature, and a beating with shoes is held to be an outrageous insult. In a hot country people go normally without shoes or sandals, except where the road is too rough for the feet, when they put on the shoes they have been carrying in their hands. Manucci tells how at the siege of Bakhar a cannon was loaded with old shoes so that Khalilullāh Khān's tent could be peppered with them to make a laughing stock of him. In Sind, a Muslim land, this prejudice against leather is not felt by three-quarters of the population¹ and we have no reason to think that in Moghul days the habits of the people differed in this respect materially from what any traveller can see for himself in Sind today. The Balūchī warriors, according to Burton, wore 'dastāna', a short gauntlet, the more necessary because the sword hilt offered no defence to the fingers, and the shields were of different sizes and shapes according to the taste of their owners and were generally made of leather or rhinoceros hide². In fact the truth is rather that leather was employed for a variety of purposes which today are accounted better served by metal. This is natural because metal does not exist in Sind, whereas the materials for the production of leather were everywhere abundant, and the preparation of leather was a widespread and prosperous cottage industry in this part of India. Had it not been so, Manrique could never have observed, 'This region abounded in cattle, especially buffaloes which were so numerous that many ships were dispatched to various ports laden with their hides. From these they manufacture the lovely leather which the Portuguese style "Sind leather", ornamented with back-stitched work in different coloured silks, in fine designs and finished off with fringes of silk at the ends. These leathers are used to cover tables and as hangings in reception rooms, as well as for beds, as they are very soft and cool in summer'³.

(5) *Fish and fish products*

Sind has always been noted for the excellence of its fresh and salt water fish. Fish has always been esteemed as an article of food except by those classes of Hindus which are vegetarian.

¹ The practice of removing leather from the feet on entering a mosque cannot be cited as an instance.

² *History of Sindh*, pp 240-1

³ Manrique op cit, p 239

Almost every traveller in Sind has made reference to the abundance and the cheapness of fish in the markets. Manrique describes the skilful way in which pallo (*Clupea shiba*) was caught in the Indus by fishermen balanced on earthenware pots, an industry carried on to this day in exactly the same way. Hamilton says that he got in Tatta the finest carp he ever saw or tasted. 'Some of them weigh above twenty pounds weight and we have them alive in Tatta market'. As early as the time of Ibn Haukal, the Arabic traveller, it was noted that the races of people who live near the river 'dwell in houses formed of reeds and eat fish and aquatic birds'.¹ The Āin-i-Akbarī says that the staple food in Lower Sind 'consists of rice and fish. The latter is smoked and loaded in boats and exported to the ports and other cities affording a considerable profit. Fish oil is also extracted and used in boat building. There is a kind of fish called palwah (pallo) which comes up into the Indus from the sea, unrivalled for its fine and exquisite flavour'.² The centre of the sea-fishing industry was Karāchi, and the coastal area. But the fresh-water fisheries were also valuable.³ There was a business in dried fish for export and there is also mention of an industry, existing before the British occupation, namely the preparation of isinglass which had its area of consumption in the far East. The shipping of all these commodities, which did not interest the English and other foreign traders, was in the hands of Muhammadans, Persians, Arabs, Zanzibārīs and Memons of Cutch and Kāthiawār, who owned country craft. They were in fact the ancestors of the men who still conduct much of the coastal trade of Western India today by means of the dhows or 'padāos' whose great lateen sails make a picturesque scene in every small coastal port of Western India from Sind as far south as Malabār. The Lower Sind littoral was, with Gujārāt, Kanara and Malabār, one of the great areas which supplied this indigenous seafaring population. In the days of the second factory doubtless many of them indulged in piracy. Fish, in varied forms suitable for transport, was one of the articles of commerce handled by these men of business. The modern sea fisheries of Karāchi and the Sind coast⁴ flourish on much the same lines as the fisheries

¹ Hamilton op cit

² Elliot I, p 40

³ Elliot II, pp 336 9

⁴ Lieutenant Del Hoste says 'Fisheries are established at different places, and the rivers and water courses portioned off to the Mohānas or fishermen. At each of these places there is a Mehta to collect the duties which consist of one-third of what is daily caught'. Secret Department, Sind Mission Memoirs by Lieutenant Del Hoste. Bombay Government Records, 1832 p 39

⁵ See *The Marine Fisheries of the Bombay Presidency*, by the present writer

which supplied the articles of fish food exported in the days of the Moghuls and the Kalhōra

It will thus be seen that the popular modern idea of Sind as a desert is as fallacious as the view that seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind was a purely agricultural country wholly dependent on the fertilizing waters of the Indus for its existence. Actually, Sind supported half a dozen thriving industries, the importance of which the general histories of India do not mention. A large part of the population was also dependent upon camels for a livelihood and the vast herds of buffaloes made possible a brisk local trade in butter and ghi, which is mentioned by writers like Withington, Manucci and Hamilton. The camels supplied camel hair which was one of the raw materials used in rug- and mat-making, and camel keeping on the Delta was a well-organized business. This we know from the words of Crowe, who says 'Camels are bred in every part of Sind and the greatest number in the salt marshes near the sea where there is an abundance of furze and scrub affording them rich food. Fresh water is brought down to them every week by the keepers who go two or three days sail up the river for the purpose.'

VII *Trading methods and progress of the East India Company in Sind*

It is utterly fallacious to assert that the profits made by the East India Company in its commercial dealings with India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were to the disadvantage of the Indian producers. To suggest such a conclusion is to depreciate too much the intelligence of the Moghuls or the Kalhōra. The government of the day was very much alive to its own interest and permitted only what it considered advantageous to itself. Certainly no part of the policy was to impoverish the people of the land in order to enrich foreign traders. These foreign traders never had things as they wanted them to be, as the history of the two factories in Sind proves conclusively. A judicious and impartial Indian historian has in fact definitely asserted, and substantiated the assertion by quotation from contemporary evidence, that throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Indian industries were kept alive and developed by three chief agencies, the Emperor of Delhi, the nobility of the time, and the export traders. It is no object of this book to enlarge on this theme. Careful students of the Moghul régime are fully aware of the facts and know how the wealth of the Delhi Court and of the feudal aristocracy which ruled the land was one of the main incentives to Indian industrial activity. 'The foreign traders were, however',

says Sarkar, 'the chief cause of the expansion of our manufactures, especially of articles of ordinary use as distinct from superfine articles of luxury and rare art products, though a certain quantity of the latter class of goods was also shipped abroad.'¹

The Sind factories did not differ in organization and methods from the Company's factories elsewhere. The system prevailing at Surat, which was the headquarters of the first Sind factory, has been described by Rawlinson² quoting the original authorities. Conditions at Tatta and Lāribunder were necessarily more primitive, as we have complaints about the unsuitability of the house in Tatta, the unhealthiness of the surroundings of Shāhbunder, and the lack of amenities at Lāribunder and Shāhbunder, where the damp climate affected badly the woollen goods stored in the warehouses. The servants of the Company comprised merchants, factors and writers. After five years' service as a writer a man was promoted to become a factor, after three years as a factor he became a junior merchant and after three years as a junior merchant he was promoted to be a senior merchant. It seems that in Sind most of the officers who held charge were junior men, even the Resident at 'Scindy' can hardly have been a person very high in the Company's service, despite the numerous difficult tasks of diplomacy with which he was being continually presented. The Sind factory had always a surgeon attached to it, though many of the surgeons seemed unable to keep themselves well and more than one of them died in service in Sind. There appears never to have been a Chaplain. So the Sind factories have no shrewd commentator of the stamp of Terry or Ovington to give graphic details of the everyday life. The Resident himself was a person of some dignity which he always endeavoured to uphold. In fact his refusal in the time of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro to call upon the Prince except in a manner which he considered consonant with his position led to some minor misunderstandings. It must, however, be said that the Resident was always received politely by the Sind ruler when he did call and he was treated with much personal respect. To what extent the Residents spoke the language of Sind is not known but certainly many of the Company's servants did know both Persian and Sindhi, possibly Robert Bouchier did, and certainly Robert Sumption. It must not be forgotten that even in the interregnum between the two factories there appear to have always been Englishmen engaged in trade in Sind, though probably they were doing business mostly on their own account. There was, however, during the prosperous period

¹ See *Moghul Administration* (Second Series) by Jādunath Sarkar, pp 71-81

² See *British Beginnings in Western India* by H. L. Rawlinson

of the later Stuarts and afterwards, a great demand for Sind cloth¹ from Europe and much business was done. Presumably this was achieved from the Ahmedābād factory working through travelling English agents and native brokers and the goods must often have been shipped by native craft.

In the days of the earlier factory the salaries of the factors were low, £50 per annum, but this was supplemented by much private business. It seems that Spiller and Scrivener in the seventeenth century must have employed much of their business acumen on their own account. In the eighteenth century salaries had risen and Beaven as Resident was paid £200 per annum. But even then private business had not been debarred. It seems clear from the records that Robert Sumption, who in the decade previous to the establishment of the second factory had gained much personal acquaintance with Sind trading conditions, must have been there for years doing business on his own account. The low salaries were in fact supplemented in numerous ways as Ovington makes clear.² 'We must remember', he says, 'that the banyans, once a year which is their great festival season called the Diwally time, have a custom, much like that of our New Year gifts, of presenting the President and Council, the Minister, Surgeon and all the factors and writers with something valuable either in jewels or plate, atlases or other silks according to the respect which they owe to every man's station whereby the young factors, besides their salaries, diet and lodgings, are supplied likewise with clothes sufficient for service a great part of the year, which things prevent their necessity of any great annual expense and happily contribute towards giving them a life of delight and ease'. Furthermore, the profits of private trade were considerable. As Ovington says,³ in 'the advantageous liberty of traffick to all parts from China to Surat they commonly make cent per cent. They can sometimes make fifty per cent from thence, if they only carry out silver and bring home gold and those among them that are persons of credit and esteem but of small fortunes may borrow from the banyans money for China at 25 per cent and that only paid upon the safe arrival of the ship, which if it miscarries on the voyage are exempt from all damage'.

It will thus be manifest that in the days when the East India Company was purely a commercial and trading company, the official business was much supplemented by the private transactions of the factors and that these private transactions were carried out in a sort of co-operation with the Indian moneyed traders who shared in the profits. The fact, too, that these Indian traders were ready

¹ See *The Trade of the East India Company* by F. P. Robinson *passim*.

² Ovington, pp. 401-2.

³ *ibid.*, p. 391.

to offer yearly at Dīwālī large and valuable presents to the Company's servants proves that the co operation was profitable, since it would be unreasonable to believe that the banias gave away wealth on this scale without any hope of advantage to themselves. In Sind there were many considerable Hindu traders on whom the Company's agents relied and the names of them are mentioned casually in the East India Company records, for example Bumbamal, who was required to make a large payment to the Moghul officers out of his wealth, and Navaladās, who is quoted as an instance of a reliable man of business capable of financing commerce between Sind, Multān and Lahore. In fact he must have been one of the merchants called Multānīs, who have given their name to an efficient banking business, men whose names are still current in the indigenous banking and commercial transactions of this portion of Asia.

The ordinary method of business was for the Company to employ Hindu brokers or gumāsthas, who arranged direct with the producers of the goods, paid them advances made by the Company, and provided the goods under the supervision of the factors. The factors made trips to all the chief centres of production like Nasarpūr, Schwan, Kandīāro, Darbēlo, Rōhrī or Bakhar and often spent a considerable part of the year in outlying places. The amount of bullion which was thus imported into Sind for financing these transactions was considerable. The records show many instances. The goods thus procured were of great variety though cotton pieces were the chief item. Robinson¹ describes the exports of the East India Company as including cinabars, vermilion, copper, mother of pearl, tortoise-shell, quicksilver, stick lac, safflowers, indigo, green gingers, sugar candy, cassia lignum, aloes, anacardium, bergamum, churranja oil (preparation of Indian hemp), sago, galingale, curries, tinea (crude borax from Tibet), nut vomica, long pepper, cotton yarn, tea, cake lac, elephants' teeth, shellac and gunnies, and the warehouses of the Company showed a still greater variety of goods like blue longcloth, damasks, satins, Persian taffetas, velvet, diapers, chintzes, gold gauze and shawls. Sind did not, of course, supply all these, but many of these articles were traded in from time to time in Sind when opportunity offered, as some of the invoices show.

The mechanics of the trade have been described by Sarkar² 'They followed the commercial medieval system of giving "dādan" or advances to individual workmen and looking after them in their cottages and seeing delivery of the goods at the proper time by means of an army of agents. They also bought extensively at big marts through their Indian brokers, usually under the supervision of

¹ Robinson op cit, *passim*

² Sarkar *Moghul Administration*, pp 71-81

European factors The suppliers at these marts were not big capitalist manufacturers but a large number of individual producers and a few wandering middlemen who had made their purchases in the villages of the producers and brought them to the market for sale

In the case of the major portion of our exports, the European Company's agents (*gumāshtas* and *peons*) regularly visited the workmen in their cottages to see that the *dādan* was being applied to the right use' The *subedār* or *faujdār* had often to be bribed to bring pressure on the workmen to work honestly

The profits of the Company were admittedly large as long as the Western demand for India-made goods prevailed The Company's encouragement of the cotton trade of India did not, however, pass without challenge from the English weavers, whose business at home began to suffer, especially after 1672 when the Company brought out to India English weavers in order to improve the technique of Indian production This led to protests from the weavers of Spitalfields, Bethnal Green, Canterbury, Norwich, Bristol and other centres of English production The two Indian articles that competed with the English manufactures were silk, raw and wrought, and calicoes The churchwardens of Bethnal Green petitioned the House of Commons about this time (1695-7) They alleged, 'The poor of our hamlet are grown extreme numerous amongst us, in regard many weavers and others employed in and about the silk and woollen manufactures have entered His Majesty's Service The weaving trade and several other trades developing thereon are extinguished among us, which formerly used to be the chief maintenance and support of the necessities of our poor, the importing of wrought silks, Bengals, and printed and stained calicoes from India and Persia being the chief occasion thereof' 'We have', said one writer of the time, 'created already and are now inciting the Indians and Chineses that are a numerous and laborious people and can and do live without fire and clothing and with a trivial expense for food'¹ Sind goods had become very popular in London by this time and the East India Company records show a list of goods to be provided at 'Sind' for the year 1696 This demand continued to grow and in a protest of the time we learn, 'The quantities of chintz required in 1699 reached still higher figures The list of goods to be provided at Surat and Bombay (the headquarters of the Company in India since 1687) included the following cotton yarn, 400,250 bales, quilts, 25,000, chintz of all kinds, 46,000 Scind goods of all sorts that could be had were to be sent Bombay and Surat seem to have been the principal sources from which the Company secured the supply of goods'

¹ Shaf'at Ahmad Khān op cit, p 154

Along with this great expansion of the trade the export of bullion naturally increased despite the great opposition of the mercantilist school of thought. The average amount annually exported during the years 1607-1702 was not less than 2,800,000, but 'during the years 1607-9 there were exported 1,177,850 13 ounces of silver and 4,027 3 ounces of gold'.¹ It is not relevant to the purpose of this book to trace the subsequent fate of the weavers of England. The East India Company, as a result of an arrangement with the various conflicting interests who wished to share its profits, emerged in 1708 stronger than ever and established on a broader basis of capital. As a result there set in an era of unparalleled prosperity which lasted till the end of the first half of the eighteenth century. The statistics prove the course of this progress, despite the wars of the European nations with each other. While in 1658-67 only 99 ships with a tonnage of 31,040 tons were sent out to the East Indies trade, by 1718-27 the number of ships had risen to 150 and the tonnage to 62,040, and in 1748-57 to 180 with a tonnage of 87,200. During all this time Sind had no factory, but it would be wrong to assume that Sind supplied no goods, since Bombay and Surat and Ahmedābād continued to flourish and the Indus river traffic did not, as far as we know, seriously diminish. All the same, Sind did not continue to hold its own with Bengal and Gujārāt, and, with the gradual growth of an indigenous cotton industry in England, Indian goods began to fall off in demand² while saltpetre became more important in the trade statistics of this part of India. The strange muddled foreign politics of the time require comment. Bāl Krishna says: 'In those days when no international law was recognized to bind the European and Asiatic nations whenever the European peoples were free to fight amongst themselves and surprise and capture each other's ships and even dominions beyond the Hebrides, trade was nothing but armed commerce, guarded and preserved by means of armed vessels and armed men. By various progressive measures the Company brought them to such a state of perfection as to make them surpass the shipping employed in almost any service whatever the navy of Great Britain perhaps not excepted'.³ From the East India Company records in the

¹ Sha āft Ahmad Khān op cit p 273

² By the middle of the eighteenth century before any machinery had been invented to revolutionize the manufacture of piecegoods not only was the home demand fully satisfied by the English manufacturers but large quantities were being exported to the continental and American markets. Since 1710 almost the whole oriental trade in manufactured goods had been meant for the supply of foreign markets. These were being captured by England and thus the demand for Indian cloth had been yearly curtailed.

³ Bāl Krishna *Commercial Relations between India and England* (1601-1757) p 252

Bombay Record Office we know something of the shipping strength which supported the second factory in Sind. It was no wonder that Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro was anxious to obtain the help of British ships for his projected war with Cutch. Doubtless it was to gain the favour of the Company for some such undertaking that he relinquished in favour of the Company the old imperial prerogative of the government to all wrecks and wreckage and salvaged goods. In his appreciation of the strength of the Company at sea he was ahead of the Moghuls who never, till the end, and when it was too late, realized the importance of sea power in India. By 1775, when Sārfarāz Khān Kalhōro, for reasons already made plain, forced the withdrawal of the English factory from Tatta, the Company had bigger interests at stake in India than a share of the declining trade of Sind. It found what it wanted more easily obtainable in other parts of India, with results that are known to everyone familiar with the later eighteenth century in Indian history. By 1770 India's commanding lead in cotton piecegoods had disappeared for ever, entirely because of the force of economic circumstances outside the control of any one. Sind suffered with the rest of cotton manufacturing India and, with the loss of the English trade, there arose the circumstances which the later Kalhōra exploited to turn Sind into a self-contained Muslim state closed for nearly three-quarters of a century to Englishmen. Tatta's day of glory was over and Sind relapsed into a condition of lethargy which it maintained till, after 1843, it was again drawn into the maelstrom of world politics, and communication with the outside world began in earnest once more. The decline of Sind's trade from 1775 onwards was not due to the incapacity of the Kalhōra or the narrow parochialism of the Tālpūrs. Nothing the Kalhōra or Tālpūrs could have done would have stopped effectively a decline due to circumstances beyond their control. This point has been very clearly made by one of the most sagacious observers of Tālpūr rule, Dr James Burnes¹. But it has been stated equally emphatically by Assistant-Surgeon Heddle in 1836 with whose wise words we may close suitably this chapter on the trading wealth of Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: 'Are the Ameers to blame if the manufactures of their country have been ruined when we find that in this article of nitre for instance, the supplies, which once employed the industry of their subjects, are now derived by the former consumers from another quarter?' The manufactures of cloth (loongees) which formerly were so prosperous at Tatta have fallen, not through the barbarous policy of the Ameers but by the changes in the state of society in India and in those countries whose princes and nobles were the

¹ Burnes *A Visit to the Court of Scinde in 1828*, pp. 66-7

principal purchasers of such luxuries. The deterioration of the Indus by which its navigation has been so much obstructed has been caused by no fault of theirs. The people of Sind have also been much decried, but the charge has been too indiscriminately brought forward against the whole population. The large masses of the indigenous population are particularly industrious whether in the occupation of agriculture or the manufactures. The merchants of Sind are active and intelligent, well protected though heavily taxed by the Government. The people are orderly and obedient and the laws are respected.¹

¹ Bombay Government Records No XXII New Series p 425 Pt II
Memoir on the River Indus by Assistant Surgeon Heddlie May 1836

CHAPTER III

THE SIMPLE ANNALS OF THE POOR

I *The standard of life*

'IN the East the people does not change', says Lane-Poole, 'and there far more than many more progressive races the simple annals of the poor, however moving and pathetic, are indescribably trite and monotonous compared with the lives of those more fortunate to whom much has been given in opportunity, wealth, power and knowledge'.¹ These words are only partially true, and to some extent are definitely misleading. Not only are the lives of the poor anywhere not lacking in opportunity, but, were they indescribably trite and monotonous, the novels of writers like Gissing and Arnold Bennett could never have won popular appeal. The fact is that the modern mind is more interested in the fate and doings of the ordinary man than in the lives of princes and nobles. The study of economics has altered the mental outlook of all who think about serious things. It is absurd to say of Sind that the common man lacked opportunity when weavers conquered the country of Bahāwalpūr, and the offspring of mendicants and shepherds from the Balūchistān hills sat successively upon the throne of Sind. In fact all oriental history is a story of exploits by persons who generally made their way for themselves and hacked out a career of their own. These persons were mostly sprung from the multitude living on the bare subsistence level.

Vincent Smith quotes Sir Harcourt Butler to the effect that 'Famine lies broad written across the pages of Indian history'. This, too, is a half truth grossly misleading as a generalization if it means anything more than that severe famine used to follow failure of the rains. Of Sind it is particularly untrue. Sind is one of those lucky lands that are not seriously troubled if the monsoon rains fail, because Sind is the creation, the slow geographical accretion, of a river that provides life-giving water with unfailing regularity, though the bounty may not be equally copious every year. The calamities that have fallen on Sind are those of unchecked inundation, of drifting sand that covers fertile land, of changing river channels and of the capricious vagaries of a wandering flood that washes villages away in a night. In the Moghul and Kalhōro days Sind did not support one quarter of the population it now supports.

¹ *Medieval India under Muhammadan Rule*, Preface, p. v

The cultivated land was much more confined to the immediate vicinity of the river than it is today, when enormous canals carry in every direction the silt bearing waters of the Indus scores of miles from the river. Thus Sind has always been able within its limits to support in modest comfort a tolerably well-fed population. It is fallacious to assume that since history began this phenomenon has altered very much in character. Ibn Haukal wrote long ago of Mansūra, an old capital of the early Arab government, 'It is like an island and the inhabitants are Musulmāns. The climate is hot and the date grows here.

The place also yields a fruit called ambaj (mango) resembling the peach in appearance and flavour. It is plentiful and cheap. Prices are low and there is an abundance of food.¹ Al-Idrisī, another Arab traveller, says much the same thing.

'That of which we are speaking is great, populous, rich and commercial. The buildings are constructed of bricks, tiles and plaster. It is a place of recreation and pleasure. Trade flourishes. The bazaars are filled with people and well stocked with goods.

Fish is plentiful, meat is cheap and native fruits abound.² If we come down to the later days of the Moghul period, the prosperity of Sind impressed itself equally strongly upon observers. The Āin-i-Akbarī says, 'In the winter there is no need of poshtīns (fur lined coats) and the summer heats are moderate except in Sewistān. Fruits are of various kinds and mangoes are especially fine. In the desert tracts a small kind of melon grows wild. Flowers are plentiful and camels are numerous and of good breed. The means of locomotion is by boats of which there are many kinds large and small to the number of 40,000. Fishing likewise is much pursued.

Shālī rice is abundant and of good quality. Milk curds of excellent quality are made and keep for months.' The writer of the Tārīkh-i-Tāhūrī is ecstatic in his praise of Tatta in its prime. 'In truth', he says, 'at such a fortunate moment was the foundation of this place laid that trouble and affliction have never visited its inhabitants. Contented with what they possess they carry on their affairs in luxury and ease. The cheapness and happiness which reigns among these people has never yet been or ever will be found elsewhere.' These accounts prove that the inhabited Sind of former generations was not a hard and barren land yielding but grudgingly her gifts to those who tilled the soil and sought a livelihood. The land was considered a sort of Arabia Felix with a quiet, industrious and intelligent people living in isolation from the rest of the Indian continent.

These descriptions cannot all be untrue. But how can this delightful picture of bounty, luxury and ease be reconciled with

¹ Elliot I, pp 24-5

² ibid., p 78

the sad accounts of a poverty-stricken land given in the nineteenth century by foreign travellers? The explanation is simple. The standards by which comfort and elegance were judged were very different in 1840 from what they had been in 1640 and 1740. Most of the European commentators were too ignorant of the spirit of the East to distinguish the vital difference between its mode of civilization and that of a Western world pulsating with the reforming ideals stimulated by the prickings of a conscience unnerved by the unfortunate results of an uncontrolled Industrial Revolution. It was futile to expect a man of Burton's temperament to be anything but critical and supercilious of what he saw in Sind. He despised Sind for what he considered its lax Muhammadanism. He reviled the harshness of a Moghul type of Government which had succeeded in persisting into the middle of the nineteenth century. Pottinger, Del Hoste, Postans were all of the same school of thought. They were eager Western reformers anxious to change anything they considered bad by the standards of an England charged with a civilizing mission. It is not fair to gauge an Oriental land by such ethical measuring rods. Only a few sagacious fair-minded observers like Heddle and Burnes offered a slightly protesting voice against the chorus of disapproval. A language is usually a key to a people. The Sindhi language is a beautiful instrument of precision admirably adapted to the civilization for which it was intended—a peace-loving agricultural and pastoral culture elaborated by an industrious and non-martial people. But it is naturally deficient in words suited to the kind of civilization for which Burton stood. Sir Charles Napier was a clever man and a more than usually alert administrator. But one of the first proclamations he issued proves that a fierce kind of missionary and reforming zeal possessed him. 'Indians, Balooches, Afghāns, Hindoes,' he thundered, 'I have caused two men to die because they murdered two Afghāns. Every man who commits a murder shall be put to death. I have no command in Afghānistān but when Afghān or other strangers come under the protection of the British, vengeance be upon those who injure them. Men shall find safety and protection in Scinde. The merchants and the travellers shall pass along the road with safety, death be to the robber and the murderers! Such is the law of God who rules alike over the Mahometan, the Hindoo and the Christian. His will be done!'¹ Gone are the casual autocracy of the Kalhōro, and the capricious laissez-faire of the Tālpūr rule. In their place has arisen a strange new standard of absolute right and even-handed justice enforced by strangers in a strange land. Arabia Felix was verily to be absorbed in this new Roman empire of Victorian pattern till every cultivator

¹ Proclamation by Sir Charles Napier, 21 October 1843

and shopkeeper should shout with joy 'Civis Romanus Sum' and learn new ideas of justice and equality before the law

II *The common man*

What sort of life did the common folk live in seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind to call forth the disparagement of these reformers? A few salient points only can be emphasized. Since this book does not profess to deal exhaustively with social life in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries in Sind I propose to describe briefly merely some selected aspects of the economic conditions in which the people lived. In forming any final views on these matters we must remember that the comparison can be only with standards applicable to the common people in the days of the Stuarts in the seventeenth century and in Johnson's age in eighteenth century Britain. Speaking of the condition of rural England the authors of *Johnson's England* say, 'Before the Industrial Revolution the mass of the people of all classes, though they worked for longer hours than now (eleven to thirteen hours normal) and for less pay, had the great advantage of living in the country instead of in the city and even the dwellers in the moderate sized cities of that time were not far removed from rural influence and tradition.

In the fortunate eighteenth century many villages were centres of industry as well as agriculture. The typical Englishman was a villager, but a villager accustomed to meet men of various crafts and occupations and classes, by no means therefore a rustic boor ignorant of all save the plough handle'¹. With certain differences this picture is true enough of seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind. The society was an agricultural and pastoral one with cottage industry well-diffused and with town-life, as we understand it today, concentrated in Tatta only. None of the large villages where industry flourished were big enough to be divorced from the thought and feeling of the rural country side.

It is impossible to exaggerate the important place irrigation in Sind has always played in the social and economic scheme. Without this artificial aid of man the country could not have supported even the small population of Moghul and Kalhōro days. Whatever may have been the condition of irrigation in Hindustān generally under the Delhi Empire—and most writers say that irrigation was neglected—the critical observations of Indian travellers are not true of Sind, where rainfall is scanty and never regular or sufficiently timeous to permit of untroubled cultivation on rain water alone. There is quite satisfactory evidence to show that in Moghul and Kalhōro times irrigation in Sind was intelligently conducted and that the disorder which harassed the land from time to

¹ The Age of Johnson by G. M. Trevelyan in *Johnson's England*, p. 11

time did not greatly interrupt the business of distributing water over the land by artificial channels. Thus the statement of Bernier, 'The ground is seldom tilled except under compulsion and no person is willing or able to repair the ditches and canals,' is untrue of Sind, which could not have supported its population unless the 'ditches and canals' had been kept in order. The Moghuls especially, when they had Persian advisers familiar with the usefulness of irrigation in their own arid land, were not unconscious of the need for improving irrigation in Hindustān. But public money in those days was used for the erection of costly tombs, mausoleums and palaces. It was not spent on what we now call public works of utility. There is, however, an exception to this generalization in the seventeenth century canal enterprise in the Punjāb and improvements carried out on the old Delhi Jumna canal. There is mention of a Canal Act by Akbar in 1568 for the digging and deepening of a canal to be called the Shaikh Nāi to bring the waters of the nālas and streams at the foot of the hills at Khaizābād into the Sōn and Jumna rivers. The sanad relating to this work announces grandiloquently, 'My government is a tree, the roots of which are firm in the earth, and being watered by God's grace, its branches reach to heaven. In acknowledgement of God's mercy in establishing the great empire, my desire purer than water is to supply the wants of the poor, and the water of life in my heart is larger than the sea with the wish to dispense benefits and to leave permanent marks of the greatness of my Empire by digging canals and founding cities, by which too, the revenues of the Empire will be increased.'¹ The promise, however, was but poorly fulfilled. Sind certainly received no benefit in this respect from the Moghuls. The Sind canals, Persian wheels and wells were constructed by the natives of the land without any assistance from the Empire of Delhi, which showed no interest in them at any time.

III *The standard of comfort*

(a) *Places of residence—dwellings*

The common people lived in habitations of the poorest description, the grass hut by the river or in the fields, the dwelling of twigs covered with a conical roof like a beehive as described by Withington, or unsightly erections of mud. There were mud houses inhabited by the merchants, traders and the better-off artisans in the larger villages and in Tatta were a few superior buildings such as the house to which Hamilton was brought in 1699. Only Tatta could then offer comparison with towns like Lahore and Āgra. It is doubtful if

¹ J. R. A. S. Bengal, XV, 1846 pp. 213-23.

This work, however, is noticed by neither Ferishta nor the Ā'in-i-Akbari, but there seems no reason to doubt the authenticity of the evidence.

Tatta even in its best days could ever have lived up to Monserrate's description of the large towns of Upper India. 'None the less the rich adorn the roofs and arched ceilings of their houses with carvings and paintings, plant ornamented gardens in their courtyards, make tanks and fishponds which are lined with tiles of various colours, construct artificial springs and fountains which fling showers of water far into the air and lay down promenades paved with brick-work or marble.' Monserrate is here plainly describing the places of the ruling aristocracy. Lahore in the beginning of the seventeenth century seems to have been built largely of brick.² Of the common people he says merely, 'The common people live in lowly huts and tiny cottages and hence if a traveller has seen one of these cities he has seen them all.' In actual practice the agricultural and pastoral population of Sind had to live in huts, in temporary residences, such as they could afford to erect or as suited their occupation, which dictated in the one case that the huts be capable of speedy erection in the fields and removable when the floods inundated the land, or in the other that they be pitched like tents near the pasture grounds which shifted from year to year with the set of the river or the line of the floods. Moreover such residences in a land liable to be overrun at any time by riotous soldiery could be burnt with small trouble and so by such devastation help to dissuade the soldiers from turning that way. We have no accounts of Kalhōro days. The evidence mostly dates from the time of the Tālpūrs. As the statements of these nineteenth century travellers do not differ much in general effect from the evidence of Moghul days and accord very much with present-day conditions in agricultural and pastoral areas in Sind, there is no reason to disbelieve them.

The Tālpūrs, like true Balūchīs, set little store upon magnificent buildings. Despite their wealth they were content to live in places which modern opinion would consider ill-fitted to their dignity. Pottinger says of them, 'The houses of the Ameers (in Hyderābād, their capital) inside are extremely mean in construction and appearance and there is not a single room in the palace which exceeds 30 feet in length. The doors and windows are generally framed of common deal plank and without being even painted and their furniture is very shabby. The bazaar of Hyderābād is very mean and though there is abundance of supplies, as far as the produce of

¹ Reference Monserrate *Commentary* p 219

² Burnes says 'The villages of Sind on this side of the Indus are much inferior in appearance to those of Cutch and are entirely destitute of stone buildings and tiled roofs which give an air of neatness and comfort to those of the latter country. They are for the most part collections of low huts comprised entirely of clay and thatch while even the mosques with which they abound are generally of the same frail materials' p 26

the country goes, there are no European articles with the exception of a few white clothes and coloured chintzes. There are several other ancient buildings of brick in Tatta and amongst them what was formerly the Company's factory, an unsightly edifice in the native style. The present houses of Tattah are generally of mud but advantage has been taken of the quantities of bricks remaining, which are strewn about in every direction, to build the foundations and four or five feet next to the ground of some of them of that material.¹ It seems likely that the Balūch influence was partly at least responsible for the decline in the standard of building and it is probable that during Kalhōro days Tatta and the larger centres of population contained many pretentious buildings of brick which have long since disintegrated in the saline soil and dust-laden atmosphere of the lower Indus valley. Von Orlich, writing in 1842 of Lower Sind conditions, says, 'All the houses here are built of clay, they are scarcely twenty feet high, have flat roofs, from which a kind of ventilator sometimes rises and air holes supply the place of windows. Long continued rain would destroy these huts and sweep away entire villages.'² All who are acquainted with Lower Sind today will recognize the truthfulness of this picture. The early Arab writer Al Idrīsī had noted previously that 'in Dēbal (Lahar Bunder) the houses were built of clay and wood.'³ Pottinger, speaking of Tatta, remarks that, 'The houses here are built on a plan that I have never met with in any other country, as the walls are made hollow by small pieces of stick being nailed across each other from the outer edges of a small frame of wood, these bits of stick are usually from eight to sixteen inches long and placed diagonally so that they form a very strong frame on both sides which is plastered over with mud or mortar and has all the appearance of a solid wall. Some of the buildings erected on this principle are three or four storeys high with flat heavy roofs, which is a proof that they are very strong.'⁴ This will give some idea of what the best buildings in Sind must have been like towards the end of the Kalhōro rule.

The decaying ports of the Indus delta, Vīkkur and Ghōrabārī,

¹ *Memoir on Sīnde*, 1832, p. 187

² Masson noted in 1826 that in Shikārpūr 'The houses of the principal Hindus are distinguished by their loftiness and extent,' but the town itself he found suffering from the usual inconvenience of narrow and confined streets, nor is too much attention paid to cleanliness. The bazaar is extensive and well supplied. The town is surrounded by numerous gardens, flourishing mangoes mulberries bananas, melons and other fruits.

The neighbouring lands produce wheat, jowār, cotton and an oleaceous plant. The grass is very plentiful and luxuriant, particularly towards Larkāna hence milk and its preparations are good and abundant' *Journals*,

pp. 144-5

³ Elliot I p. 77

⁴ *Travels in Beloochistān and Sīnde*, p. 353

were much less pretentious. Carnes says of them in 1836 that the houses numbered about 200 'constructed of reeds and grass plastered with mud'. In his account of the Chāndookah (the present Lārkāna area) Lieutenant James noted that the villages were of good size and nearly all possessed a bazaar. 'The houses are of mud with flat roofs and those of the poorer classes are of tamarind wood covered with mats and boughs or, where procurable grass. Many villages are comprised almost entirely of dwellings of the latter description, little, if any distinction being observable between the sheds of the cattle and its owners. In low land the villages are raised and sometimes have also a ditch all round them as a guard against the waters of the inundation. Those which are the residences of chiefs, or large zamindars and Government officials have mud fronts with a tower at each corner and in almost all the villages is to be seen the watch tower which served as a place of defence for the inhabitants if suddenly attacked by predatory bands'.¹ He adds that similar towers were erected in the fields to protect the crops against mountain robbers, and that all the villages were dirty in the extreme and had few appearances of comfort. The Sindhi village must in fact have reminded one strongly of the villages of early medieval Europe. The village clustered round the mosque, the bazaar and the head man's house, and encircling these were the lāndhis (or sheds) of the Sindhis, usually in enclosures of thorns containing the dwelling, the sheds for cattle and platforms raised on wooden poles on which people slept in the hot weather. Near by were thorn pens for goats and sheep. This description is still true in most particulars of the small agricultural villages scattered throughout the length and breadth of rural Sind today. Lieutenant James states that Chāndookah contained no fewer than three hundred and ninety-two of such villages. The population in most of them would not have exceeded five hundred and most of them were inhabited by the family and relatives, in varying remote degrees, of the head man of the place, a sort of petty feudal lord who lived more or less in the same style as the meanest husbandman of the pastoral tribes. Pottinger says that they live in 'wāndhs', 'which are a collection of hovels, built of straw and wattles and some plastered over with mud. From Karāchi Bunder to Sehwan on the western bank of the river all the dwellings except those in the immediate vicinity of the Indus are of this construction. The population of these wāndhs seldom exceed 600 or 700 but there is one called Kahorānī forty miles south west of Hyderābād which is stated to contain 4,000 souls'.² The bazaar with its poor mud

¹ Bombay Government Records op cit. p 469

² *ibid* p 392

³ *Memoir on Sind* p 249

buildings was usually inhabited by the petty Hindu traders while the Musulman cultivators dwelt in their brushwood lāndhis round about it under the protection of the feudal chief or headman. The whole system is intensely reminiscent of the early Middle Ages in Britain, and the village had to take its own measures to resist the robbers who continually threatened to descend upon it and carry off as many of the cattle and as much of the stored grain as they were able to remove with impunity.

(b) *Population and food*

Vincent Smith has remarked on the low prices which prevailed in the Moghul Empire of Akbar's day in any year when crops did not fail. 'It is clear', he says, 'that a man could feed himself adequately at a cost of from a penny to twopence a day'.¹ What evidence there is for Sind for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seems to bear out the truth of this conclusion. Provisions were usually abundant and prices ruled low. But this may be merely a sign that the country was under-populated for its productive capacity. It is difficult to decide whether the decline in the industrial activity of Sind that set in with the decay of Tatta and the deterioration of the cotton weaving industry really coincided with a fall in the population. Most writers have assumed that the tyranny of the Tālpūrs had by the time of the British annexation reduced the population below what it had been a century earlier. There is, however, no reliable evidence to prove any such conclusion. Lieutenant Del Hoste calculated in 1832 that the population was 850,000, of which about one-fourth were Hindus.² Burnes³ in 1828 estimated the population at about one million, of which 25,000 were in Shikārpūr, 20,000 in Hyderābād, 18,000 in Tatta, 15,000 in Khairpūr and Karāchi, and 10,000 in Sehwan and Mīrpūr. Pottinger states that by this time Tatta had much diminished in size. 'Even so recently', he states, 'as the period of Nādir Shāh visiting Tatta on his return from Delhi it is said that there were forty thousand weavers of calico and loongis in that city and artisans of every other class and description to the number of twenty thousand more, exclusive of brokers, money changers, shopkeepers and sellers of grain who were estimated at sixty thousand, whereas the aggregate population of it at the present day is believed to be overrated at twenty thousand souls and the revenues derived from it are not equal to one lakh of rupees per annum'.⁴

But Pottinger is rightly distrustful of the accuracy of these figures for the Kalhōro days. It is none the less true, however, that Hamilton in 1699 had noted that 80,000 weavers had died of plague, caused by the failure of rains shortly before his

¹ *Akbar the Great Moghul*, p. 393 ² *op cit*, p. 27 ³ *op cit*, p. 115

⁴ *Travels in Beloochistān and Sindh*, p. 344

arrival in the city. The population of Karāchi in 1813 by actual enumeration, according to Pottinger, was about 13,000, which was more than one-half greater than it had been in 1809, and of these the majority were Hindus 'who prosecute a most extensive commerce in despite of the heavy customs and duties that are levied by one of their own tribe who farms the revenues of Karāchi' ¹. From this conflicting evidence it is very difficult to reach any very satisfactory conclusion. But one fact is certain, namely that between 1740 and 1800 there was a great shifting of the population of Sind, the chief concentration altering from Latta to Shukārpūr, Hyderābād and Karāchi. Sukkur was much slower in starting its career of progress. Von Orlich in 1842 found that it contained no more than 6,000 people as against 8,000 in Rōhrī. The Commissioner in Sind in 1847 put the total population of Sind at 1,271,732 which 'taking the area at 48,000 square miles, would give nearly 27 to the square mile. With reference, however, to the prevalent opinion as to the deficiency of population and the large portion of the surface occupied by desert and morass I should be inclined to think even this moderate proportion a high estimate' ². It would thus appear to be a safe conclusion that during Moghul and Kalhōro days the population cannot have exceeded one million altogether, or less than a quarter of what it is at the present day. The difference today is accounted for by the vast extension of irrigation since the date of the British annexation. It seems likely that all through Moghul and Kalhōro days the population remained fairly constant for the simple reason that irrigation was static. It continued to be dependent on the bounty of the river, helped by the rule of thumb methods of water distribution, under a system that was not financed, as modern irrigation works are, by the full resources of a settled and highly organized system of administration with other ideals of service than collection of revenue and waging aggressive wars.

There was a considerable difference between Upper and Lower Sind in respect of crops and cultivation. The Commissioner in 1847 said that the produce was 'similar to that of India, bājri and jowārī being the principal early crops and wheat and barley the principal late crops, the former more prevalent in the Upper, the latter in the Lower portion. Rice is grown partially to the northward but more extensively in the low southern parts towards the sea in favourable localities. Cotton, indigo, sugar cane and tobacco are raised but not to a great extent' ³. The Chāndookah and the Lār were the two

¹ *Travels in Beloochistan and Sindh*, p. 344

² Bombay Government Records, Revenue Arrangement Sind, Vol. 20

³ *ibid* Vol. 203. Masūdi remarks of the neighbourhood of Mansūra 'The whole country is well-cultivated and covered with trees and fields' Elliot I, p. 455

vegetables, and apples, melons, mulberries, figs, grapes, peaches, plantains, mangoes and dates among the fruits. Rōhrī was considered the garden of Sind ' and the gardens do actually extend without intermission ' The lowness of prices excites his remark ' In Sind a milch cow costs 12 rupees, the best camels 25 or 30 each, a cow for slaughter 6 rupees, the best sheep one and a half rupees, goats from 1 to 4 rupees and the finest fowls are ten for one rupee ' The pastoral tribes lived largely on milk, curds, cheese and millet bread, and the river fishermen consumed fish and aquatic birds, a fact mentioned by Ibn Haukal The excellence of some of the crops aroused the interest of travellers Thus Von Orlich while travelling in Upper Sind north of Rōhrī speaks of ' fields of holcus sorghum (jowārī) which were so flourishing that some stems were fifteen and sixteen feet high The sticks were almost as thick as sugar cane, the sap has a juicy sweet taste, it is eaten by the inhabitants and is a nourishing and wholesome food for horses and cattle ' 2 Present-day travellers in Sind who have seen the jowārī standing high enough to hide a man on horseback will recognize the accuracy of this picture,

Thus, except for the greater area under cultivation today, we have no reason to think that the Sind of Moghul or Kalhōro days differed very much in the essentials of its crop production. In these days cultivation hugged the river and the large natural channels much more closely than it does today. But all the evidence proves that the land was well able to support its population in comfort and abundance and that famines such as devastated less fortunate parts of India had ordinarily no terrors for the Sindhi peasant, who, whatever his poverty in matters of money might be, had no difficulty in supplying himself with the immediate needs of life. It was on this agricultural economy that the life of the common man depended. No one who has studied the vast rural vocabulary of the Sindhi language will fail to recognize the extent to which the cultivation of the soil and the rearing of camels, cattle and sheep have coloured and enriched the culture of the people. All the industries which flourished in Moghul days had their solid foundation on this sure and steady agricultural production renewed year after year by the spreading waters of the Indus in flood. In such a state of culture, money wealth played a comparatively unimportant part, and the remark of Manucci is very much to the point ' It is quite true that if the common people here³ have four rupees, they are quite high and mighty and decline service. It is only when they have nothing to eat that they take service '

¹ Pottinger *Memoir on Sindh*, p. 173

² *op cit*, p. 131

³ i.e. India *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 388

(c) *Wages, prices, social condition*

There is very little extant evidence of the rates of wages paid in Moghul and Kalhōro days in Sīnd. But there is no reason to believe that the statistics of the Āin, corroborated by contemporary evidence available in respect of other parts of the Delhi Empire in the seventeenth century, are untrue as far as Sīnd is concerned. In Sīnd as elsewhere 'Poor people then as now in India thought in terms of copper coins and the revenue accounts were made up in "dāms" at the rate of 40 to the rupee'¹ Ordinary labourers of that age according to Farūkī² were paid 2 or 3 dāms per day, that is, one-twentieth of a rupee. Skilled workmen received Rs 3 or 3½ per month, household servants Rs 2 per month. One and a half dāms were sufficient to provide a man with daily sustenance. In the eighth year of his reign Aurangzēb had issued orders against forced labour (bēgārī). But it is quite certain these orders were not enforced in Sīnd where forced labour had always been in practice and where it continued long subsequent to Aurangzēb's time. Indeed several of the biggest canals were dug by labour conscripted in this way. One of the best canals in Upper Sīnd is actually still called the 'Bēgārī'.

The stability of wage rates in silver during the seventeenth century in India was very remarkable. Methold, who left Masulipatam³ in 1622, put the rate for factory servants at approximately two rupees per month. In 1658 William Smyth quotes almost identical rates, 4 or 5 shillings, as the wages of factory servants in the same neighbourhood. Akbar had allowed ordinary labourers 2 and 3 dāms per diem, the Dutch in 1637 usually paid 2 dāms (4 pice) to ordinary labourers and 7 pice to superior men. Carpenters were paid 12 and 13 pice by the Dutch while Akbar⁴ had allowed 6 and 7 dāms for skilled men. In Surat in 1636 a messenger detained there was paid an allowance of 3 pice daily, probably the minimum subsistence allowance, as the man was described as a 'lean lazy knave'⁵. The lowest grade of slave at Akbar's court was paid an allowance of one dām daily⁶. The evidence from such different places as the East and West coasts of India and Akbar's court confirms the general steadiness and uniformity of wages during a great part of the seventeenth century.

¹ Moreland believes that from 1627 onward the rupee was worth 30 dām or 60 pice as against 40 dām under Akbar. *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, Appendix D.

² *Aurangzēb*, p. 492.

³ Moreland op cit., p. 178.

⁴ *ibid* p. 194.

⁵ *English Factories*, V, p. 294.

⁶ Moreland op cit., p. 195.

The facts in the eighteenth century are not so easily documented, but some information can be gleaned from the accounts of the East India Company. From these it does not appear that wages to the Company's menial servants had greatly improved. For the year 1781-82 in the Surat Pargana 110 persons, consisting of 1 amildār, 1 mīchta, 6 jemadārs, 100 sepoy s, 1 trumpeter and 1 masīlchī were paid Rs 473 per month and at Navsārī an establishment of 16 persons was paid Rs 93 per month, these payments including charges for paper, ink and lamp oil as well as wages.² Burton says of the Sind soldiery that the smallest sum paid to footmen under native rule was about three and a half rupees per mensem, but some of the horse men got the respectable salary of one rupee a day. The soldiery, however, were not given much in the way of diet.³ Burnes in 1828 encountered some Sindhi soldiers on guard and customs duty between Cutch and Sind and says, 'A few Sindhi soldiers, not above eight or ten, whose only place of residence is an open wooden shed and whose chief food is camel milk, are stationed at Lah (near the Runn) to collect a tax on the merchandise that passes and they are its only inhabitants.'⁴ Prices continued low all through the eighteenth century. The Land Paymaster's price list for Surat⁶ in 1780 shows that beef was obtainable at 3 rupees per Surat maund and that a Surat maund of bread cost 2 rupees 2 quarters. The value of the rupee in terms of food fell in the ratio of from 7 to 1 between the close of Akbar's reign and the twentieth century. It seems to have remained for about eighty years in the seventeenth century at about seven times its present value and then to have fallen a little in the eighteenth century. The wages of Rs 3 to Rs 5 per month, which may be taken as more or less current for those days, thus correspond fairly closely in actual purchasing power with present-day standards. The labourers, artisans and peasants were therefore relatively little worse off in Moghul and Kalhōro times than they are today. In fact their general condition was much the same: they lived just as little above the subsistence level. They did not make any money and could not save for reasons which are still true of Indian society, reasons

¹ In 1793 the pay roll of Mahādji Sindhi's General Col de Boigne's troops shows that the monthly wages of bheestis was Rs 4 per month, khalāsīs Rs 4 to 4-8-0 blacksmiths Rs 6 carpenters Rs 5 bullock drivers Rs 4 syce and grass cutters to each two horses Rs 4 per month. *Mahādji Sindhi and North India* pp 392-4 Poona Residency Correspondence, 1936

² *Surat Diary* 1781

³ Burton *History of Sindh* p 242

⁴ Burnes op cit p 23

⁵ He says elsewhere: 'In the field the Sindhi soldier has no discipline and as his pay is generally contemptible and frequently uncertain he conceives himself fully privileged to supply his wants at the expense of the villages on his march.'

⁶ *Surat Diaries*, p 431

inseparable from the climatic conditions of the country, the risk of uncertain yield of crops, lack of industrial development, overpopulation in comparison with the resources available, and social customs which require heavy expenditure for special occasions, despite the fact that the purse is nearly empty. The margin between earnings and subsistence was probably more precarious than it is today when famines and other calamities of major importance are provided against generously by subventions from state funds. The real burden on the peasant was the arbitrariness of the autocratic form of government with its constant exorbitant demands. The peasant and the poor man in India have always been at the mercy of the moneylender, who in Sind employed the resource of advancing money against a share of the crop, and making the loan partly in grain at prices which suited the moneylender but bore heavily against the cultivator and the artisan. The system still prevails and legislation can apparently do little to check it.

The Commissioner in Sind reported in 1847,¹ 'It is chiefly from private capitalists that the cultivators derive the means of carrying on their operations. Here as in India the great bulk of the tillers of the soil are indebted to moneylenders and for the accommodation derived from them they pay highly. They may in fact be considered as mere labourers, the wages of whose labour is limited to a mere subsistence while the creditors are a class by whom, as the means of providing the agricultural stock are advanced, its profits are realised.' Carless said in 1837, 'The condition of the lower classes of the peasantry of Sind is truly wretched.' But he exaggerated considerably when he continued, 'Unable at times to obtain a sufficiency of food and clothing for themselves, it is quite out of their power to provide for the wants of a wife and family and they never marry.' The whole economic history of India refutes this rash generalization. In such circumstances the family goes to work, the wife and the children included, and somehow or other it manages to exist and multiply. But even today in Sind one of the chief obstacles in the education of the peasant class is the fact that children of eight and upwards earn a few rupees a month by herding cattle and camels, and so cannot without financial sacrifice be sent to school. It is certain that in Moghul and Kalhōro days similar conditions were universal and that the peasantry lived their poor lives of toil and distress knowing nothing better and expecting little else. The state had not then arrived at the conception that part of its duty is to give everyone a fair chance as far as circumstances permit. The religion of Islām provided a means of assuaging poverty in the system of zakāt and

¹ Bombay Government Records, Revenue Arrangement Sindh, Vol 203

the Hindu social polity employed the joint family system to the same end. But as the effectiveness of both these institutions depended largely on private conscience which works capriciously, they were poor alleviations of the distress caused by the autocracy and oppression of those in power. An active public conscience in these matters had not yet made itself felt in India. It is fallacious therefore to apply to the defects of the system the ethical standards of a much later day, a fault much indulged in by Indian historians and economists. The subsistence level was certainly not pitched so low as to prevent the enjoyment by the poor of a few cheap pleasures, which included, as Carless says, smoking, usually indulged in to excess, while 'a strong spirit distilled from gūr is in great request amongst all who can afford to purchase it. The lower orders use bhang and intoxicating and very deleterious drugs obtained from hemp in large quantities' ¹

The Moghul administration was always singularly successful in maintaining the purity of the coinage ². The chief coins issued by Akbar were the gold mōhur, the silver rupee and the copper dām. The rupee of Akbar weighed 178 grains, the dām (also called paisa or fālūs) was a massive coin weighing 323.5 grains. The gold mōhur of Akbar was worth nine rupees and the gold mōhur of Aurangzēb sixteen rupees. The exchange value of the rupee in Aurangzēb's reign was 2s. 3d. In addition to these coins, pagodas and mahmūdīs were also in circulation. The former, current in South India (Bijāpūr and Golkonda), was a gold coin worth three to three and a half rupees, the latter, current in Gujārāt, where it was the chief silver coin, was worth two-fifths of a rupee. All these coins, except possibly the pagoda, were used in Sind and in addition there were lārīs described as 'made of silver like a poynt tagg worth 12d. per peese', in common use in Southern Persia, Sind and Western Asia. The unfortunate Withington was relieved of five of these coins by robbers in Lower Sind in 1614. Pagodas and mahmūdīs were not minted at the Imperial mints, of which there was one at Tatta. Thevenot says that 'the silver money of the Great Moghul is finer than any other', and Ovington asserts that 'the gold of Surat is so very fine that twelve and fourteen per cent may be gained by bringing it to Europe'. Despite this there was considerable difficulty over exchange because of the number of rupees of different coinages in circulation. At any particular time the current rupee (chalānī) was accepted as standard, and earlier issues (khazāna) were accepted subject to differing amounts of discount.

The records of the second English factory in Sind contain

¹ Bombay Government Records op cit XVII, New Series, p. 495

² See Farūkī op cit, p. 485

many references to divergences in value between different mintages of rupees. Some of the financial transactions, usually carried out for the Company's agents by Hindu brokers, were in this way exceedingly complicated and it is not easy to understand them on the evidence available now. The shortage of small coin often hindered the factors of the first English factory in Sind when they had to make payments in the villages to weavers, who being poor men, thought and worked in terms of the copper coinage. So the Company's agents, carrying rupees about with them, were in constant need of much small change. The Bombay Diaries of 1724 throw light on the variety of coins that were accepted for silver minting by the Company in its own mint. The coining for Bombay was actually done by one Gunsēt, a Goa goldsmith, on contract under the supervision of a Mint Master, and different rates are quoted for the silver value in rupees of coins so varied as pillar dollars, mexico (sic), ducatoons, French crowns, old Sevil dollars, Crusadoes, Peru (sic), Lion dollars and German crowns¹. The Company's rupees were in great demand in Sind in the days of the Company's trade there in the eighteenth century, as we know from the business correspondence.

Pelseart² has given a vivid picture of the condition of the poorer classes under the Moghul régime. He was deeply moved by the poverty and oppression prevalent everywhere. 'There are three classes', he says, 'of the people who are nominally free but whose status differs very little from voluntary slavery, workmen, peons or servants, and shopkeepers. For the workmen there are two scourges, low wages and oppression. They know little of the taste of meat. For their monotonous daily food they have nothing but a little Khichri made of moth (green pulse) mixed with rice cooked with water over a little fire until the mixture has evaporated and eaten hot with a little butter in the evening, in the day time they munch a little parched pulse or other grain, with which they satisfy their lean stomachs'.³ The picture is generally consistent with accounts of the conditions in Sind. Salbank in 1605 said Rōhri was full of 'painful people'. Spiller in 1645 found the cultivators of Upper Sind 'miserably oppressed' and Carless in 1836 said much the same thing of Lower Sind. The report of the Commissioner in Sind in 1847 tells a similar story in more careful official language. Thus, despite the bounty of the river and the fertility of the inundated land which produced abundant crops, the poor were never well-off. The fact is that the reward of labour, agricultural, industrial or casual, has little real

¹ *Bombay Diaries*, p. 39. Selections Home Series, II.

² Chief of the Dutch factory at Āgra 1626.

³ Translated in Moreland. *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 199.

relation to the yield of the harvest or productivity alone, but depends upon the suitable balancing of supply and demand and upon the extent to which the labourer is permitted by the government or by social standards and practice to enjoy the profits of his toil. In Sind no less than in India generally throughout the Moghul and Kālīhōra periods, circumstances continually conspired to grind the poor in their poverty. While admitting this melancholy fact we shall waste our labour in deprecating it because nothing could then have altered a system which was thoroughly ingrained in Indian life, habits and social observance. In Europe at the same time, as Farūkī has pointed out very clearly, the condition of the poor was deplorable. The Moghuls and the Kālīhōra were alike creatures of their age, a harder and less sentimental age than the present. The common man was much nearer to the struggle for mere existence than he is today when, with greater respect for law and order, and greater security of life and enterprise, wealth can grow and, with wealth, the financial strength of a state which seeks to deal considerably with the woes of the unfortunate.

(d) *Irrigation*

There is no evidence that the Moghul administrators did anything to maintain or improve the irrigation of Sind. But it must be remembered that under the Moghul system the local authorities were recognized to the extent to which they could exercise local control, provided they kept faith with and observed their feudal obligations. The conclusion seems, therefore, to be that in Moghul days the care of canals, watercourses, embankments and wells was left largely to the local chiefs, who could not have afforded to neglect them since the revenue depended upon some control of the waters of the Indus. There is not the slightest doubt that skilful irrigation has existed in Sind since the earliest days and that the present system of canals is the work of generations of cultivators who by rule of thumb methods succeeded, within the bounds imposed by the limited public resources of those days, in bringing water on to the land and controlling to some extent the vagaries of a very capricious river. Raverty's monumental work on 'The Mīhrān of Sind' endeavours to trace the wanderings of the Indus over Sind during historic times and is characterized by a wealth of contemporary evidence from all native sources, backed up by an extensive study of the geography of the Lower Indus plain. Modern Sind presents everywhere over its alluvial area traces of the wanderings of the Indus, ever breaking out into new channels and deserting old ones. It is still possible in many parts of the country to follow these old river courses and find on their

banks the relics of villages which have long since disappeared. Precision of irrigation such as exists today was unknown. Instead of precision there was uncertainty or capriciousness as channels altered and fresh areas of soil came from time to time under flood.

The old Sindhi system was to use the natural river channels thus formed, dig small watercourses from them, excavate 'khuhādos', at which Persian wheels worked, and make the utmost possible use, by means of wheels and wells, of low-lying places where the flood waters collected. In these low-lying hollows, which go by a vast variety of names in the Sindhi language, much cultivation was possible, and even where the circumstances made irrigation impossible, there were great expanses called 'chhans' where grass and jungle scrub grew luxuriantly, nourishing the vast numbers of camels, buffaloes and bullocks which supported a large population and were the foundation of the milk, curds and ghee business and of the leather and hide industry described by travellers. In olden days the area under flow irrigation was incomparably smaller than it is today when canals have been dug on scientific principles and the levels of a canal, from its head to its tail, have been worked out to fractions of an inch. Thus rice, which is a 'flow' crop, was confined to areas where flood water could be conducted without much difficulty of control so as to give the depth of stagnant water that this crop requires. These areas were chiefly in the Lārkāna district of Upper Sind, called Chāndookah in the old records, and in the low-lying land nearer the delta in Lower Sind on what is now the lower alluvial tract of the Hyderābād and Karāchi districts.

James in 1847 has given a most attractive picture of what the rice lands of Chāndookah were like. 'Between the Ghār and the Nāra', he says, 'the rice cultivation is very extensive. The villages are principally raised mounds and in some cases further fortified from inundation by a ditch carried all round them. All the canals and most of the villages are prettily wooded. Between the Nāra and the Indus the surface is more broken and intersected with many a natural water course. The lower lands, where the waters of the inundation recede, yield beautiful crops of pease, gram and barley requiring but little care on the part of the husbandman. A belt of forest clothes the banks of the Indus averaging two miles in depth, where the silvery balm, seesum and the bābōol grow luxuriantly, the intermediate space being covered with a tangled brushwood. The stranger who leaves the noble river and the cool shade of the neighbouring forest, on the open spaces of which herds of bullocks are grazed and rich pastures comes now upon the rush steppes of grass and now under the grassy meadow, pease and barley crops of

temporary huts occupied by a wandering party who have brought their cattle here for pasture, and there the more pretending village

again entering the forest he crosses a newly cleared belt of ground, where the blackened and rugged stumps of bībool stand curiously forth, a proof of man's inroads and affording a strong contrast to the surrounding verdure. There he meets a busy throng, the temporary occupants of a few matted huts, engaged in the manufacture of reed baskets and mats, the materials for which are so plentiful.¹ Pottinger mentions a large canal passing close to Khairpūr by which small boats approached the place during the floods. At other times the canal was quite dry and was used as a road. Rōhrī was surrounded with gardens. 'In sailing the Indus', says Pottinger, 'many large towns and villages are met with on the banks, but at certain points the nature of the country renders it so evident that extensive inundations must take place during the freshes, that the towns are for safety all built some miles away from the banks and this has led some travellers to believe that in many places the country on the banks of the Indus is deserted, which is usually far from fact.'² He states also that 'to the north and north-west of Shikārpūr there is a large tract of country which at one season is entirely under water owing to certain mountain streams, which come from the hills to the north and also from a great body of water which, during the freshes, forces itself through a deserted channel of a branch of the Indus which formerly flowed south-west from the main river 100 miles north of Bakhar. The water from these two sources, having no channel of escape, inundates nearly the whole face of the country and even in the dry season leaves it so cut up that it is passed with difficulty by horses'. Similar conditions prevailed in Lower Sind which was another great rice-growing area.

Del Hoste mentions the following branches of the Indus, namely Pūran, Nāra, Ārul, Fulēlī, Gūnī, Pinyārī, Gāngro, Lakhī, Sitta and Bhagār, and adds that there were also several important watercourses and extensive marshes. Of the former, the Nāra, Dādajī and Nūrwāh, of the latter, the Māruī, Manchur, Mīrpūr and Kinjar lakes. Hamilton in 1699 has described the fertility of the Indus silt and writes of Tatta that it stands on a spacious plain and 'they have canals cut from the river that bring water to the city and some for the use of their gardens'. Conditions such as these were very different from those described as prevailing in Upper India in Moghul times, when Bernier was impressed by the absence of, and the neglect in improving irrigation works

¹ James op cit

² Pottinger *Memoir on Sindh*, p 244

The truth is that Sind has always been a pioneer of irrigation in India and has had a system of canals and watercourses since the beginning of historical time, tended by people who knew very well how to use the bounty of nature. Oral tradition in Sind today ascribes many of the older canals now existing to the energy of the Kalhōra. There is no doubt whatever that the Kalhōra as Sindhis themselves realized the importance of maintaining the system. There is, furthermore, some ground for believing that the irrigation existing in those days was superior to that prevailing during the regime of the Tālpūrs, whose irrigational works were not numerous and who tended to be parsimonious in their grants for the essential annual clearance of the inundation canals and watercourses¹. Dr Kennedy in 1840 says of the Ārul canal that 'it is an artificial canal dug in some long forgotten age by some patriot sovereign or by some wise generation which preferred spending their money on what was useful rather than the usual waste of both in which kings and subjects are alike disposed to indulge'. James states that the Shāh canal, which suffered a decline under the Tālpūrs, was dug by Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro, whence its name and also the name of the village of Shāhpūr. 'The traces of extensive cultivation are visible throughout its course and the records of the Amīrs prove its former value to the government'. The Sārfarāz Wāh in the Hyderābād district is ascribed to Sārfarāz Khān Kalhōro, whose tyranny led to the withdrawal of the second English factory and to his own deposition. It is, therefore, quite fair to assume that the canal system taken over from the Tālpūrs in 1843 represented a series of public works which had been even more efficient in Kalhōro days.

We have very full evidence in the Bombay Record Office of the condition of that system in Lieut-Colonel Scott's report in 1853 on 'the management of Canals and Forests in Scind', a most valuable official document which throws great light on the conditions which must have been prevalent during the eighteenth century and earlier. Col Scott examined with the critical eye of the scientific engineer the irrigational system inherited by the Tālpūrs. He found much to criticize. 'It may fairly be said', he remarks, 'that the whole system of canals in Scinde is one of makeshifts and expedients to save some present expense. There are many works which are now called canals but which were probably mere improved branches. It does not appear that the Amīrs took any trouble respecting these branches. In fact I scarcely think that much can be done to them by manual labour. It appears to

¹ Shāh Bahāro, a minister of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro was an enlightened man who excavated several canals in the Chāndookah. See James op cit.

me that the Indus in former days threw out many more branches than it does at present or I that there has not been any very natural change in the course of the main stream'. The defects of the system which impressed themselves on Col. Scott's mind were (1) that districts removed from the river were very scantily supplied with water even for the ordinary purposes of life, (2) that the water in wells was often very offensive from the practice of lining temporary walls with rough branches sometimes ingeniously supported by a sort of coiled plant of tamarisk, (3) that the brick sluices in the canals were defective, as they were not furnished with gates but cross beams were built into the side walls and support branches of trees and rubbish were thrown in to stop the water, (4) that the system of embankments a peculiar feature of Sind irrigation, was very unsatisfactory.

These embankments need further description as they were very common. The remains of old works show that great attention was paid to them in former times. Unless where the land is adapted to wheat cultivation unrestricted inundation appears to be dreaded. These embankments which are constructed of alternate layers of earth and brushwood and built as steep as possible, are in fact extremely insecure. The face exposed to the river is annually faced with brushwood but even this seems to afford little protection. During high floods they require to be watched day and night and are always under repair of some sort. The water of the canals is passed through the embankments by means of brick sluices similar to those before described.¹ In places where water lay in ponds and lakes cultivation was always by the Persian wheel, of which Sind possesses two types, the 'nār', a big wheel driven by camels, and the 'hurlō' or small wheel driven by a pair of bullocks, or even a single bullock. Such cultivation is called 'lift' because the water has to be lifted on to the land on an endless chain of earthenware pots and the crops cultivated by this method were 'dry' crops like bājri jowārī, cotton, sugar cane and vegetables. Wheat and barley were generally grown on flood water, 'sailāb', or on land that had a watering before the floods subsided, called 'bōsī'. These methods are still in use today and can be seen all over Sind, where each droning water wheel,² with its small 'lāndhī' and little orchard

¹ Col. Scott op cit.

² Dr Kennedy who on his way to join the British army for the Afghan campaign of 1840 passed through the Lārkāna district northwards writes 'Independent of the Ārūl, which is about five miles south and takes a westerly and southerly course round the country to Sehwan there is another canal about eighteen feet deep and one hundred broad which coming from the Indus passes close to Lārkāna and proceeds westwards and north. We

of cucumbers and castor oil plants and standing trees, is a petty social centre

With a river that carries so much silt as the Indus and with the old winding watercourses and canals regular clearance of silt was imperative. Maintaining the flow of water was the most expensive part of the irrigational system. Elaborate rules and regulations dealt with this subject. There were four main systems (1) the clearance of the large canals (called 'wāh') was done by the Government alone in some cases, (2) in other cases the clearance was done by the Government but the cost was partially recouped from the cultivators, called 'sherākātī' (or sharing system), (3) in the case of other canals, the smaller ones, the Government made an allowance of a certain number of 'khāsas'¹ in the 'kharār'² of produce as the government share of clearance—mukhādīmī, (4) in all other cases the cultivators cleared each watercourse and smaller channels, called 'kariō' or 'kasī', entirely at their own expense. A whole district was liable to be called out to do canal clearance and usually received a certain quantity of food in payment.³ Colonel Scott was unable to find any trace of regular annual clearance. There was a distinct liking for excavating new heads to canals rather than cleaning out old ones, usually a very laborious process, as the banks had from previous clearance become very high and steep so that it was difficult finding anywhere to throw the silt. 'At present the canals contract and expand without any reason whatever and there is scarcely a canal in Sind the banks of which are straight for a single mile. The native management of the canals was in fact entirely guess-work and there was no attempt to combine the canals into one system.' Canals could often be seen running parallel with each other for long distances and the frequent jāghīrs made it very difficult for the Government to do much in the way of unifying control. When clearance was to be done and paid for by the Government, the kārḍār prepared an estimate of the total sum required without giving details. The Amīr had rude maps and lists of the canals in his territory and was familiar personally with the nature of the

¹ Subsequently travelled a stage of fifteen miles along its course. It was dry at this time and we were told that the inundation of the previous year had not attained its height and filled its bed as usual, but with every hundred yards of its extent there were wells dug on its channel and on aridus tracts agricultural population was seen employed in irrigating extensive tracts of the desert. See *Narrative of the first expedition of the British in Sindh*, 1843, p. 10.

² For the banks of the Indus the clearing of the silt was done by the Government. For the smaller canals the clearing was done by the cultivators. For the larger canals the clearing was done by the Government. For the smaller canals the clearing was done by the cultivators. For the larger canals the clearing was done by the Government.

land. Calculations were made in the rupee of the district and the measure was the 'guz', which had different standard lengths in almost each pargana. A cotton rope was used to measure the work and the rise and fall of the land were measured by the eye only. The Amirs sanctioned as much as they thought fit and the amount depended more on their idea of the kārḍār's honesty than on the necessities of the work. Thus both authorities took means to protect themselves, for it was likely in such circumstances that the kārḍār would estimate for more work than he actually intended to perform and it is certain that there was much corruption in carrying out clearance. In Hyderabad and Karāchi districts there were no fewer than fifty-six sets of rules governing the payment of clearance charges. Usually half of the amount paid for was paid in kind and not in money. There was generally a distinction between earth carried out by the basket and earth thrown out by the hoe. The former, which was called 'dhūli', was more laborious, and must have been necessary in all the older canals with high banks. The latter was called 'uchal' (throwing). The difference in remuneration between the two methods was calculated as worth six guz (yards) per rupee. The kārḍār superintended the work of the kāmriās (labourers) and was assisted by amīns and mōhirīs. The amīn measured the depth of the excavations and the mōhirī the length and breadth of them. To help them in their calculations, small portions of the canal beds, called tākīs (bench marks of earth) were left in their original state for measurement purposes, exactly as is done in canal clearance in Sind today.¹

Col Scott says that the canal clearance records of the Kalhōra are not recoverable, but, from the remains of sluices and very large canals, much more trouble and expense appear to have been incurred in days previous to the Tālpūrs. Amongst all the accounts Col Scott was able to find only one for a brick sluice. That irrigation was allowed to decline in Tālpūr days is fairly probable. James says 'The picturesque village of Khairō Garhī (i.e. Garhī Khairō) presents a desolated appearance, the ruins of villages are frequently met with and choked-up beds of watercourses all evidence of former prosperity', and other writers comment on canals that have fallen out of use. The Tālpūrs were undoubtedly miserly, and exceedingly anxious to amass large sums of money which they converted into jewels or else stored as bullion in their treasures.² Distrusting the integrity of their kārḍārs, they were always ready to cut down the demands for canal clearance and for the making

¹ See Burton *History of Sindh* p. 37.

² When Mir Fateh Ali died in 1801 he left thirty-five lakhs to divide amongst his brothers.

of fresh irrigational works. Some works were, however, carried out by them, notably the bund or embankment at Ali Bunder across the Fulēlī, which is mentioned by Pottinger as the work of Fateh Ali Tālpūr in 1799. The idea, however, that the Tālpūrs were remiss in their irrigational policy coloured the views of most English observers and is probably to some extent justified. Thus Carless said in 1837 'The Government of the Amīrs is unpopular with nearly all classes of their subjects and the peasantry do not hesitate to express their hatred of the ruling family'¹. But one word of caution is necessary. The Tālpūrs were no fools. They did nothing deliberately to ruin the productiveness of their country, though they may have been short-sighted and suspicious of improvement. It may, therefore, be quite possible that much of the decay attributed to their carelessness and parsimony by English observers was due partly at least to changes in the set of the river which resulted in some of the old river channels being left high and dry. Possessing no public works department and with the help only of venal, unreliable and unscrupulous revenue officers, they could hardly have been expected to indulge in costly experiments to bring water back into watercourses that the river had deserted and made unprofitable.

The Commissioner in Sind in 1848 held the view that the revenue system had 'too frequently been arbitrary and subject to no restraint but that of an indifferently enlightened self-interest'. But in this respect it did not differ from the government of the Moghuls or the Kalhōra and was probably on the whole better than either. Burnes, who is a judicious and fair-minded observer, says of the last native rulers of Sind 'Ignorant and oppressive as her rulers are, her annals do not show that she has ever been better governed than in recent times and they have at least the merit of having maintained her in a state of tranquil and almost uninterrupted repose for the last thirty years'². We may perhaps therefore conclude that irrigational conditions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries differed in essence very little from what the British found them to be in 1843 and that, if there had been deterioration, it was more likely to have been due to changes in the river Indus than to the stupidity of man. It was changes in the Indus that started the decline of Tatta and hastened the killing of the Sind cotton industry. It is not idle, therefore, to believe that deterioration may also have started with the drying-up of some of the more important canalized branches on which former prosperity had to a great extent depended. The facts in any case show beyond all reasonable doubt that the Sind canal system during Moghul and Kalhōro days must, within its

¹ op cit² op cit, p 66

limits, have been a very important source of the country's wealth and was by no means a fit object of harsh and ill informed criticism. It was fully capable of supplying the needs of an industrious people extremely competent at their own business of growing crops on land subject to regular flooding. The view of Burton that Sind came into British hands in an almost exhausted state and that the country was gradually becoming a desert is one that cannot be accepted without considerable qualification.¹

(c) *Health, recreation and amusements*

(A) *Health*

A hot, low-lying land subject to inundation is rarely distinguished for healthy living conditions and is particularly subject to malaria. The evidence available shows that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries public health in Sind was not good. Sind was relatively immune from famines, though there is mention of one in 1659 in the records of the first Sind factory, where it is stated that the goods to be embarked at Lārībunder 'will be fewer than usual because the famine and plague in Scinde is so great that it has swept away most part of the people and those that are left are few and what they make is bought by the country merchants at any price that causeth them not to take care it be good'.² During Aurangzēb's residence in Sind as Governor of Multān (1648-52) we learn that his jīghīr produced little revenue as the result of drought, locusts, plague and floods in three successive seasons.³ Hamilton in 1699 mentions that three years previously, because of a severe plague caused by the absence of rain in Tatta, 80,000 weavers perished. The Company's surgeons were in continual demand both in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century for attendance on the local officials and the rulers of Sind. The Kalhōra in particular were very unwilling to release the Company's surgeon once he had been permitted to attend their Court. In 1759 there was great scarcity of grain caused by the demands of the troops engaged in the Sind civil war. The Company's servants at Tatta and Shāhbunder in the eighteenth century suffered many casualties and much ill-health on account of the climate. 'The Master of the *Tyger* and almost all her whole crew are very ill at Shāhbunder and the officer and detachment in the same condition at Aurangabunder. Since my last the Corporal and two topasses are dead and two or three more are dangerously ill. Mr O'Neill has an intermittent fever every 10 or 15 days and', says the Resident, 'if I am not better on my return from the

¹ *History of Sindh* p. 43

² *English Factories in India* 1659 pp. 209-10

³ Sarkar *History of Aurangzēb*, pp. 114-25

Prince, I fear I shall never get rid of my complaints without a short trip either to Cutch or Bombay for the assistance of a Surgeon '1 In 1764 the health of the Company's servants occasioned the Resident more anxiety. He wrote on April 11th 'As no doctor of any reputation can be had at Shāhbunder I thought it necessary to get the ablest I could procure here and accordingly have this day engaged with Hājī Mahmūd at the rate of Rs 15 per month, allowing for expense of country medicine to attend to the Gallivat's crew and Bombay sepoy's and visit our different factories as the state of the sick may require'

The unhealthiness of Lower Sind and the anxiety of the populace to obtain European medicine are emphasized by Burnes, who as a doctor was qualified to speak with authority on the subject. He says that fatal epidemics and frightful pestilence, resembling in some points the plague of Egypt, occasionally devastated the land, and that ague, asthma, rheumatism and pulmonary consumption, with the long train of diseases attendant on the combination of heat with corrupt exhalations from the earth, were frequently seen. Dropsy and enlargement of the spleen were also common and at certain periods a virulent ophthalmia caused by clouds of fine dust with which the atmosphere was impregnated. The Delta he found subject to heavy dews which were supposed by the natives to be extremely deleterious and even to occasion premature old age². Lieutenant Carless, who surveyed the Indus in 1836-7, remarked that disease in the villages near the sea coast was so prevalent that whenever he approached a village he was besieged for medicines by the villagers upon whom the ravages of disease were 'disgustingly apparent'. He was much amused by persons coming to his boat asking if he had brought any English goods for sale, one wanting a pair of scissors for his wife, another some cheap cloth and a third a little brandy for a sick relative. In payment for these they were ready to offer fruits, butter and milk, which Lieutenant Carless politely declined to take from them in commiseration for their poverty and distress. This aspect of the common lot of the poor receives no mention at all in the pages of any of the native annalists. But the facts must not be forgotten in appraising the culture of the Moghul and Kalhōro epochs.

(B) *Recreation and amusements*

If any reader perusing these pages has come to the conclusion that the peasantry of Sind in Moghul and Kalhōro days spent a life of unremitting toil and oppression without any lighter moments,

¹ Letter from Robert Erskine, 16 August 1760, in Bombay Government Records

² See Burnes op cit, p 113

he will have framed an erroneous conception of the facts. The peasantry of Sind are and always have been, a happy go lucky people fond of laughter and amusement and well able to extract from their ordinary life all the fun that was procurable within their means. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that their amusement should have taken so strongly the form of indulgence in liquor and intoxicating drugs and in the employment of dancing girls whose immorality was a by-word. The religious Manrique was shocked in 1641 at the dissoluteness he saw in Latta and at the shamelessness of the public women.

There is, however, a lighter side to this dark picture. It is found in the fondness of the Sindhi for conversation and listening to songs and stories, and in the whole-heartedness with which the chief festivals of the Mussalmān and Hindu year were celebrated, the two Ids, Ramzān and Bakrī, of the former, and Hōh and Diwālī of the latter. There is much contemporary evidence proving the abandon and merriment that prevailed during these festivals, when money was spent freely and much display was made with new clothes. The beautiful song of Shāh Latīf's called the 'Cotton Spinner' is written round a background of Id. Hamilton in 1699 speaking of Hōh (which he misspells Woolly!) says that 'the populace kept a sight of the new moon in February which exceeded the rest in ridiculous actions and expense. In this mad feast people of all ages and sexes dance through the streets to pipe, drum and cymbals. The women with baskets of sweetmeats on their heads distributing to everybody they meet. The men are bedaubed all over with red earth or vermilion and are continually squirting gingerly (sic! gingelly) oil at one another, and if they get into houses of estimation they make foul work with their oil, whose smell is not pleasant, but on giving a present of rose water or some silver coin they are civil enough to keep out of doors and in this madness they continue from ten in the morning till sunset'. The Hindu women had their arms covered with ivory bracelets from armpits to elbows and from elbows to wrists of both arms, and Hamilton notes on the very great consumption of elephant's teeth (ivory).

The Tārīkh-i-Tāhūrī gives an equally vivid picture of the populace enjoying itself in one of these festivals. 'Each month', the author writes, 'has several Ids for them, the first Friday after the new moon they call in the Sindh language "Māh-pahra Jūma"'. Such a crowd of men and women flood on this day to the Makālī mountain that there is scarce room to stand. It has become a custom among many classes to consider the similar festival of Māh-pahra Sūmar, or the first Monday in each month, a great day

for making pilgrimages The pleasure of visiting each other induces them to go in large parties taking with them abundance of sweet river water and food such as they can afford The day is spent in amusements and visits to the shrines¹ When rain fell on the Kīra-tal, a sweet-water tank on the Makālī hill, men and women of all classes, Hindus and Mussalmāns, crowded there from morning till night, cooked their meals and feasted The English factors could do no work during the festivals, which were times of 'madness, riot and confusion', as the records relate At Īd the company rewarded its servants with special buksheesh and the whole place went on merry holiday² Crowe speaks of the fondness of the people for sitting the whole day and night, indulging in smoking and garrulity 'Intoxication through some measure or other', he says, 'is habituated to all descriptions of persons and bhang, a wild hemp, is the most common They make spirit both from jāgrī (molasses) and from dates which they perfume with spices and consume a great deal—the Hindus particularly The Sindians are excessively fond of singing and have good performers vocal and instrumental'³ The Āin-i-Akbarī also mentions the fondness of the Sindhis for singing and music and the prevalence of amatory songs (kāīmī)

Crowe remarks also on the corpulence of all who enjoyed ease and indolence and ascribes this to the great use of milk as a food Rotundity of figure was much admired and accounted a beauty and the princes, many of the Balūchī chiefs and officers of the court were 'too large by far for the dimensions of any European chair' Carless in 1837 says that in most of the towns there were numerous dancing girls and that the only amusement of the inhabitants consisted in smoking copious hookahs till they were intoxicated, while the women exhibited indecent postures before them Intoxication with liquor and drugs was undoubtedly a curse of the country Jahāngīr had made the drinking of wine punishable but he did nothing himself to observe his own orders and the Muslim nobles were heavy drinkers By the time of Aurangzēb the evil had increased and he took strong measures to check it His stringent regulations, though not capable of enforcement fully, may have effected some improvement

¹ Elliot I, pp 272-4

² Tavernier speaks of meeting near Daulatābād on the road from Golkonda to Surat more than 2,000 persons including men, women and children who came from the direction of Tatta with their idol which they carried in a rich palanquin on their way to visit the great idol of the pagoda at Tirupati (Tavernier, II, p 246) From this it may be inferred that conditions under the Moghuls were not really so bad as a casual reader might infer from the diatribes of foreign observers impressed by the universal poverty they saw and the capricious exercise of authority by the autocratic local rulers

³ Crowe op cit

In Sind, however, it is by no means certain that this was actually so. It is clear from the evidence of Burton that intoxication was very prevalent everywhere in an aggravated form.¹ The poorer classes consumed the pichah (drops) of the various alcohols and wines which were cheap and deleterious. There were two chief forms of liquor, 'gūr jō dārun', made of molasses and bābul bark, and 'kattal jō dārun', a spirit extracted from dates. There were in addition wines called 'angūrī' made of grapes at Hyderabad, Sehwan and Shukārpūr, mixed with gūr, 'soufi' made of aniseed and molasses brandy, 'mushkī' perfumed with musk and other perfumes, 'taranjī' made from citron peel, 'misrī' made from sugar candy and perfumed, 'gulābī' perfumed with rose water and 'kaysarī' stained with saffron. The poorer classes were, however, more addicted to intoxicating drugs than to liquor and there was a bewildering array of preparations made from Indian hemp available at very cheap rates. The chief of these were 'bhang' ('sāwo' or 'sukhō'), consisting of the small leaves, husks and seeds of the hemp plant, ground, and drunk with water or milk, 'gānjō' the top of the hemp plant, which was smoked in hookahs and 'charas' the gum of the hemp, which was smoked with tobacco and eaten when it had been made into a paste. Besides these there were 'majur' made of hemp butter, charas or dhātūra seed mixed with sugar and sweetmeats, 'khosh-khosh' or poppy seeds, 'dhātūra jō bij' made from the poisonous dhātūra (stramonium) plant and used by confectioners (halwāī), 'kōhī bhang' from a kind of henbane, consumed by fakirs and mendicants to produce aberration of the intellect and induce ecstasy, a poison which was eaten and not smoked in the Chinese fashion. The grog shops and ale houses of eighteenth century England had their counterpart in Sind in the form of 'daira' or intoxicating drug dens, which were found outside all the larger towns, and the resorts of the hemp drinkers, frequented by the lower classes, a few Sayids and munshīs and generally by the Jelālī fakirs. Burton says that near every large town there were fifty or sixty such places, that the keepers of the dens received from the frequenters presents of money and clothes, and that they were accused of inducing young men to drink bhang.²

The idea, therefore, that the poor of Sind, despite their poverty, had no means of indulging in a form of amusement that appealed to them, is thus shown to be entirely unfounded. That this form of amusement was highly deleterious is not to the point. But amusements were not confined to those questionable practices. The Sindhis were a happy and pleasure-loving people and indulged

¹ See Burton *History of Sindh*, pp. 168-9

² *ibid* p. 402

in a variety of health-giving pastimes and relaxations. The better-off were excessively fond of shikār, for which the country offered full scope in its abundance of small game. 'Their horses', says Hamilton, 'are small, but handy and swift. Deer, antelopes, hares and foxes are their wild games which they hunt with dogs, leopards and a small furious creature called by them a shoogoose.'

They have store of peacocks, pigeons, doves, duck, teal, widgeon, wild geese, curlews, partridges and plover free for anybody to shoot.¹ In the times of the Kalhōra it does not appear that the best shikārgāhs by the banks of the Indus in which the Tālpūrs spent so much of their time, to the great indignation of European observers, had been developed to anything like the extent they reached in the early nineteenth century. But it would be unreasonable to believe that shikārgāhs did not exist in the days of the Kalhōra, who maintained an almost regal state. The Mōhāna and other river living peoples, who possessed no guns with which to shoot aquatic birds, had developed a technique of their own by means of stick throwing, spears, decoys, and a skilful method of catching duck by hand on the water. They were always able to secure young birds which had not the strength to escape that full fledged birds could employ. Hawking was also indulged in and carried out with great skill, and the Sindhi language has a variety of technical words for the intricacies of this sport. Riding of horses and camels was also popular.² The Sindhi equestrian taught his horse to amble in a peculiar way that was very suitable to the rough surface of the country with its narrow dusty tracks and treacherous holes in which a trotting horse could easily break a leg. The Sindhi amble enabled horses to cover the ground at a good pace for considerable distances, and bare-backed riding was also popular and very skilful. These accomplishments are still a feature of present-day Sind. Horse and camel races were popular and made the occasion for betting and gambling under methods which had nothing to learn from the practice of the West. Polo, the great game of the Moghul nobility, does not appear to have been played in Sind, at least there is no mention of it and the game is unknown today as an indigenous sport, though it is played in the Sibī area of Balūchistān. Of the simpler forms of amusement there were many varieties. These included kite flying (patang) which was very popular with all classes and had a technique of its own,

¹ op cit

² Withington says 'They have exceeding good horses, very swift and strong, which they will ride most desperately, never shoeing them. They begin to back them at twelve months old. The soldiers that have no horses if occasion serve will ride on their camels and enter into a battle which they bring up for the purpose.' Withington op cit, p 218

Kabūtar-bāzī, betting on pigeons, lūkar bīzī or cock fighting, ghōta bāzī or ram fighting, popular at the dūra. Wrestling in the Sindhi fashion by 'malhī' was as popular as it is today, when it has claims to being the most popular sport of the country. The best wrestlers were the African negroes, brought across originally as slaves from Abyssinia, but the sport was also indulged in by the pahulwāns (or strong men) of the agricultural class in the villages. The wrestling was very expert and required a knowledge of many tricks (ārī or banū) and was peculiar in that the winner had not to throw his opponent on his back but merely to make his knee touch the ground. Wrestling in Sind is certainly a manly sport and often results in injury to the wrestlers, who throw each other with great violence on the ground. Training of wrestlers took the form of making them run, jump, hop on one leg, raise the malhī (a large stone pierced to admit the fingers), break kālhī (rods) over the wrist or arm, or force an opponent to open the closed fist. Even today village wrestling matches can be depended on for attracting a huge gathering at a few hours' notice and the spectators know the finer points of this very exacting exercise. All the ordinary Indian games played by children in India were practised in Sind. Lighter amusements included shatranj (chess), nard (backgammon), pachīs, dhara (dice), chōw par, gunjīfā (cards) and a variety of gambling games with counters at which the women were very adept, if Burton is to be believed. Last but not least were the folk dances, of which Sind possessed and still possesses a great variety and in which all classes joined with the utmost abandon. Many of the steps are very intricate and can be learned only after considerable practice. The folk dancing was very popular and was usually carried out to the accompaniment of native music played on pipes, drums and cymbals, and sometimes to the music of the ektār and sarangī, in which many Sindhis are very proficient. A popular item in such village music is often the drumming with the hand on the 'dilō' (large earthenware jar) from which expert performers are capable of producing a vast variety of rhythmic beats of differing timbre, which is very attractive. Thus these easy-going people employed many methods of relaxation which are still typical of the rural economy in which they live today and do much to add to the happiness and health of the countryside. The gloomy picture of social conditions painted by the works of Moreland must therefore be considerably toned down if a true impression is to be gained of the life of the poor in Sind during Moghul and Kalhōro days.

as long as the sardārs were faithful to the Moghul Governor he had little to fear. The Ām-i-Afbari mention amongst others the Kalmīnī Balūchīs near Lāhī who murdered 20,000 horsemen and the Nahmurdī or Nūmra near Schwīn who murdered 300 horsemen and 7,000 foot while the Mazūri Balūch were a thousand strong.¹

Aurangzīb became Governor of Multān in 1648 and in November 1649 the sarkār of Tattāw is added to his viceroyalty and the districts of Bakhar and Sewistān were granted him as fiefs. This brought Aurangzīb into close contact with the wildest and most undisciplined of the Balūch clans and he made stern efforts to instil in the hearts of these wild people some kind of respect for law and order. Amongst the tribes against whom he carried on determined warfare were the Hōts, the Nuhānīs, the Nahmurdīs and the Jōl hās (the latter, however, not Balūch). It was typical of Moghul policy, however, to win over the powerful and then use them as instruments of imperial force. This was the course adopted by Aurangzīb towards Ismail Hōt who was eventually conciliated because he was a rich chieftain with a large body of armed retainers. Having won him over Aurangzīb intended to employ him in helping to subdue the Nuhānīs and in supplying provisions for the war with Kandahār, which greatly interfered with Aurangzīb's measures for the improvement of Sind. Under the Kalhōra the Moghul system gradually weakened in the sense that military and feudal elements lost influence. The imperial officers ceased to be servants of Delhi and the importance of Bakhar and Tattā declined with the building of Khudābād and Hyderābād. The Moghul system of revenue administration and justice was, however, maintained without much alteration and the government became more a sort of co-operation between the Kalhōra and the chief Balūchī tribes than it had been in Moghul days. When the Kalhōra quarrelled with the Balūchīs they sealed their own fate. The Tālpūrs as Balūchīs themselves were able to weld Sind into a more complete unity than it had ever known in Moghul and Kalhōra days. But this unity was achieved by asserting a Balūch hegemony which had unfortunate results upon the non-Balūchī elements in the population, especially the Hindus. It was this aspect of the Tālpūr rule which so unfavourably impressed English observers in the nineteenth century and led them to draw entirely erroneous conclusions about the political conditions that had prevailed in Sind in previous centuries. Under the Moghuls and the Kalhōra Sind was never at peace. Under the Tālpūrs it was. But the price of peace was the tyranny of a Balūch

¹ Shāh Bahāro, a minister of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro, had the management of the Chāndookah and commanded a division of 10,000 men, according to James, *op cit*

minority which the Moghuls had always endeavoured to suppress and the Kalhōra unsuccessfully to conciliate

The structure of the Moghul state remained unaltered and its fiscal arrangements were never disturbed by either Kalhōro or Tālpūr. Under the Kalhōra, however, the rule of the Moghul official was displaced by local substitutes who were forced to admit unwillingly the usefulness of the Hindu population in administration, trade and finance. The Tālpūrs accepted this in fact, but the pressure of the half civilized Balūch tribes, on whose military strength they relied, forced them in practice, while employing Hindus for everything that the Muslims could not do so well, to treat the Hindus at the same time with a strange mixture of apathy, cruelty and contempt. We can thus trace successively throughout Moghul, Kalhōro and Tālpūr rule an altering in the political importance of the various elements in the population. The Moghuls were autocratic but in essence they tried to be just. The Kalhōra were tyrannical and capricious because they were at one and the same time endeavouring to establish a Sind independent of Moghul, Persian and Afghān domination and also to shake off the growing power of the Balūchī clans. The Tālpūrs had no reason to fear the Balūchīs but were bent upon keeping Sind as a close preserve of Muslim power, with the result that under them non-Balūchīs and Hindus alike were treated with less consideration than they had been under Moghul or Kalhōro. It was for this reason that the British in 1843 were deeply convinced of the unpopularity of the Tālpūr rule. British aims were then concentrated on breaking the Balūchī power and all the emphasis of criticism was laid upon the sad plight of non-Balūchīs. If these general considerations are borne in mind much of the apparently contradictory evidence as to the conditions under which Sind Muslims, other than Balūchīs, and Hindus lived in Sind during the seventeenth, eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century will be found readily explicable. Balūchīs as a class are not at all intolerant. They are a hospitable, easy-going people with a high notion of chivalry and hospitality within their social code. It seems that the intolerance which ultimately developed was due to the influence of the Kalhōra who, as fanatical Muslims, were able to draw upon the prejudices of an ignorant Muhammadan population only too inclined to take a superficial and external view of the meaning of their religion. At least this is my reading of the conflicting evidence, to which I have given a great deal of concentrated study.

It is hard to reconcile the accounts of the happy camaraderie of all classes that prevailed in Tatta during its prosperous days with the distressing stories of religious bigotry common in the records of

English observers in the nineteenth century. The Tālpūrs finding the tendencies towards bigotry well established took no trouble to correct them, as they were perfectly satisfied with their own position of personal supremacy and with their opportunities for amassing wealth. On grounds of prudence they saw no reason to invite the ill-will of the untutored clans from whom they derived their power. They followed, therefore, the easy policy of letting sleeping dogs lie. The Tālpūr rulers themselves were by no means unworthy personages. Their bearing and good manners surprised all the Europeans with whom they came in contact. Burnes and Pottinger were much impressed with their natural dignity, courtesy and intelligence. The moral, therefore, is clear that while the framework of the Moghul administration in Sind remained little altered in essentials from 1600 to 1840, the change in spirit was considerable. The personnel of the administration was adapted first to the needs of Sindhi non-Balūchīs and later to the public opinion of a Balūch minority which the ruling house dared not antagonize. The effect was to alter very greatly over three centuries the relation of the government to the governed, while retaining with unimportant changes the main features of the Moghul administrative machine, namely its feudal character, its dependence on the good will of the classes possessed of military strength, and its efficiency as a revenue collecting machine. Thus the Moghul officers disappeared and a local bureaucracy took their place. But whereas the Moghuls had tried to treat all outside the close imperial hierarchy as equally subject, the Kalhōra, and still more the Tālpūrs, were forced to discriminate against certain classes of the population, and they produced in the end a badly proportioned social system with a large number of privileged sections of the population who battered on the rest and drew their livelihood from them. These privileged classes were a strange mixed throng of very differing interests, of which some account will be given in a later chapter.¹

II *Revenue and taxation*

The Sind revenue system has been minutely described by a multitude of observers. In essentials the system prevailing at the time of the British occupation of Sind did not differ greatly from the system of the Moghuls and the Kalhōra.² It possessed two main

¹ These influences were of course not absent during the best days of the Moghul Empire. Moreland speaking generally of conditions in the Moghul Empire says 'It is safe to say that a relatively large number of producers contributed half of their gross income to the support of a relatively small number of economic parasites. *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 303.

² See Burton and Postans and for the Moghul system generally, the Āin-i-Akbari, Irvine's *Studies on the Moghuls*, Sarkar's works and Farūkī's *Aurangzēb and his Times* (*passim*).

characteristics, first, that the state share of the agricultural assessment was taken in kind (ghalabuksh in the Moghul records) and second, that taxation as a whole was extraordinarily comprehensive and touched in some form or other all classes of the population except those exempted as privileged. Estimates of the amount of revenue are all unreliable. It is impossible from the conflicting figures to form any accurate idea of the income of either Moghuls or Kalhōra, despite the multiplicity of statements on the subject. The tribute which the Kalhōra were required to pay to Herāt and Kābul was, according to Callendar, successively reduced from 21 lakhs (Nādir Shāh 1739) to 14 lakhs (Ahmad Shāh 1747), to 11 lakhs (Ahmad Shāh about 1760), to 7 lakhs (Tīmūr Shāh about 1775). Burnes in 1830 calculated the gross revenue of the state at 40 lakhs, whereas under the early Kalhōra it had been 80 lakhs. But these figures are guesswork. Whatever the tribute was, it was paid unwillingly and tardily and was always in arrears. Nothing short of a threat of actual invasion would have enforced better or more expeditious payment. Burnes states, a fact that can be substantiated from the East India Company records of the second Sind factory, that the Sind Government continued 'to pay tribute to the King of Kābul in great portion in the manufactures of Tatta which they first obtained cheap and then transferred to His Majesty at false and exorbitant valuation'.¹

As regards the incidence of the agricultural assessment the Āīn-i-Akbarī states that a third share of the crops was taken from the husbandmen. Postans says that under the later system of the Tālpūrs (probably following the Kalhōra system) the royal share of the produce was two-fifths, one-third and one-fifth according to the character of the land cultivated. Land was divided into three categories, first, land near the river that was easily irrigable without much artificial aid, second, land some distance from the river requiring the use of canals and water wheels, and, third, waste land

¹ Burnes op cit, p 139

Pottinger, however, states that by 1816 the revenue had risen from 42 to 61 lakhs since 1807 and that though the tribute to Kābul was 13 lakhs, the sum actually paid did not average one-sixth of that amount. *Account of Province of Sindh*, p 401. The belief, therefore, that revenue fell greatly with the Tālpūrs is not corroborated, despite the asseverations of European observers that the shikārgāhs had swallowed up a large share of the assessable cultivable land.

In calculating cash rents the unit employed was the jurēb (about 100 feet square) and the quality of the soil and the value of the crops were both taken into account. Opium and indigo, both valuable crops, paid 20 and 80 rupees per bigha. See Postans, op cit, p 239.

Under the Moghuls the average crop rates, according to Vincent Smith, were really selected rates, based on the average of the best field and on the average of the whole area in any given class of land.

that had to be cleared of jungle and scrub by the process of *jungal-shagāfi*. It seems likely therefore that the Kalhōra and Tālpūr system was more elastic than the Moghul and took account of differences of fertility in a way unknown to the more rigid Moghul plan.¹ The Commissioner in Sind broadly confirms Postans. He reported in 1847, 'The bulk of the land revenue is assessed and realized in kind at rates not exceeding one-third of the gross produce with some small additions to meet charges of irrigation and collection. Lower rates are occasionally fixed with reference to the greater expense of irrigation in local circumstances. Money assessments exist, though not extensively, their terms are moderate considering the fertility of the soil. They are based on a standard *bigha*, somewhat exceeding half an acre in extent, and the amount of cultivation under them is ascertained by annual mensuration' (*bighōti*, i.e. measurement by *bighas*). The Government share of the revenue in kind was kept in public granaries until disposed of and the revenue collectors used their discretion as to its disposal, by auction or contract, and also as to the time and mode of realizing the proceeds to the best of their judgement for the interests of Government.

One of the great difficulties of the Moghul system—the conflict between the demands of the central Government and those of local authority, which was a continual source of friction²—disappeared under the more unified government of the Kalhōra and Tālpūrs. Sind was then approaching a kind of natural and self-contained economy which argued a great increase in administrative efficiency from 1740 onwards. Jahāngīr had, on his accession, issued edicts condemning the levy of local cesses and other burdens which the assignees of every province and district had imposed for their own profit. About 70 years later Aurangzēb issued more detailed orders on the subject. The number of these cesses was enormous. Sarkar³ cites no fewer than fifty-four of them, but his list is not exhaustive. 'There is evidence of a conflict between the central administration which attempted spasmodically to abolish these burdens and the local authorities who maintained and developed them to meet their need for funds. The conclusion must be accepted that the conflict was decided in favour of the local authorities.'⁴ In Sind, with the

¹ On the crops being gathered in a Government officer attended to estimate their amount and to take the government share from the *khurmān* or general heap previous to which it was not allowed to be touched under heavy penalties. Postans *op cit* p. 238.

² Moreland *Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 285.

³ *Lectures on Moghul Administration*, p. 120.

⁴ Moreland *ibid* p. 285.

In Sind besides the land revenue the chief taxes were *sar shumārī*, a poll tax on non-Balūchī and Jat Muslims, *Sair*, transit dues, and a variety of cases called *abwāb*. The exceptions for *sar shumārī* were Balūchīs, *zamindārs*,

coming of the Kālḥōra, these local burdens and cesses were not abolished. They continued to be levied and under the Tālpūrs the collection was even tightened up. But as all the revenue then went into one exchequer, the conflict disappeared and with it much of the unsettlement that kept the Moghul administration in a continual condition of instability. Under the Moghuls the chief heads of central revenue were land revenue, customs, mint, inheritance, presents, monopolies and indemnities. The local cesses consisted of a variety of duties levied on artisans, retailers, producers and consumers, transit dues of every description, called loosely rahādārī and jagāt. The total incidence of these was exceedingly heavy.

The system of providing funds for local needs was not originated by the Moghuls. It was the traditional system which they found prevailing in India. They endeavoured to control it in the interests of the central Government. The chronicle of Shāhabuddīn Talish translated by Sarkar makes the position absolutely clear. That native annalist states, 'From the first occupation of India and its ports to the end of Shāh Jahān's reign it was the rule and practice to exact hāsīl (revenue) from every trader—from the rose-vendor down to the clay vendor, from the weaver of fine linen to that of coarse cloth, to collect taxes from new comers and from travellers, merchants and stable keepers'.¹ The system, as Farūkī² shows, was derived from the practice of Hindu dynasties and embraced almost every transaction that could be taxed for the benefit of the ruler. It went back to the Hindu law of taxation dependent upon the primitive village system of India, according to which the rāja took his share of all gains of any description whatsoever. The system is still the basis of local taxation in India, where local bodies depend largely for their income upon octroi, terminal and toll taxes, market and stall fees and, occasionally, profession taxes, the direct descendants of the old obnoxious transit dues, percentages of gain levied on manual skill and on the distribution and exchange of goods. When the British annexed Sind in 1843 they took immediate steps to abolish the more pernicious of these local exactions, which under

public officers, military men, religious personages like kāzīs, pīrs, pīrzādas and Sayids. Large zamīndārs had often the right to collect the sar shumārī. Men, women and children were all taxed and the head of the family was responsible for the amount which was one rupee per head per annum. Hindus paid no regular poll tax but were more than adequately taxed in other ways.

Postans states that the duties on a camel load of English manufactured piecegoods from the time of landing in Sind till they reached the north end of the country by land amounted to 58 rupees, and this did not include charges for hire of camels, payment of escort and other incidental expenses.

Postans, *op cit*, p. 244

¹ Quoted in Moreland *ibid* p. 284

² Farūkī *op cit*, p. 481

the Kalhōra and Tālpūr had attained a remarkable degree of comprehensiveness. Thus the Commissioner in Sind reported 'Town and transit duties which formerly existed have been abolished as also many inconsiderable and partial cesses prevalent under the late Government' leaving behind as the chief source of revenue land, fisheries, sea and frontier customs, excise on spirits and drugs, judicial fees, fines and miscellaneous items of small importance. One of the great curses of Moghul, Kalhōra and Tālpūr rule alike was the farming of the right to collect taxes and imposts of various kinds. This was tantamount to permitting the tax farmer to exact as much as he possibly could from every class, up to the point that the populace would bear. The system was a bad one as it admitted a middle-man who had no interest in the incidence of the taxation he collected. It opened the door to all kinds of corruption and oppression, to which contemporary records refer copiously. The vigilance of the collecting staff under Moghul, Kalhōra and Tālpūr was remarkable. Few managed to escape for long from its unceasing and persecuting demands.

In Sind there was a long list of these annoying forms of taxation and the taxpayer had little or no protection against extortion. The tax farmers, *ijāredārs* and contractors were multitudinous and formed a close bureaucracy. They were mostly Hindus who knew very well just how far they could go with impunity. Burton has cited a number of these exactions prevalent under the old régime in Sind. *Pēshkash-i-mahājan* was levied on banias who had to pay five to ten rupees annually for the privilege of trading. *Sar shumārī asnāfguran* was a poll tax of Rs. 31 per annum paid by artisans like dyers, carpenters, smiths and masons. *Dalālī* was levied monthly on all brokers for permission to transact business for caravans and travelling traders. *Hawāī* was merchandise saved from ships sunk or wrecked and had to be paid over to the government. *Furuī* was the income from the sale of all camels, goats and grazing animals which were found straying into cultivated and assessed land. *Charkhī* was a tax paid on water wheels, garden and grain land. *Ijāreh kolābha* was levied on inundated lands and lakes farmed out to government servants, who paid the government one-third of all profits on reeds cut for matting, wild fowl, water lilies and edible roots. *Ijāreh putta* was levied on passengers using ferries. *Sardarakhtī* was levied at the rate of one-half or one-third on the production of mango, date and other fruit trees. It was claimed at the time of getting the fruit. *Sardarakhtī* was also another impost at the rate of one anna per tree charged before the tree was ripe, and collected by the *kārdār*. *Tarāzu* was a tax levied on grain, fruit, articles of food offered for sale in the bazaars and was paid at

an average rate of one pice for five seers Shikār-i-māhī was levied on all fishermen who had to render up one third or even one-half of their catch Salāmatī kishtī was a charge for the safe arrival of a boat at the harbour or landing stage, the contractor charged four annas for this, six annas called 'nath' were taken when anchor was cast, and eight annas for every horse safely landed Mawēsi was charged at one anna on the sale of every horse, mule, ass, camel or cow Rēzkī was a tax on retail dealing Every purchaser paid an anna per rupee to the government If the sale exceeded 100 rupees, 5 per cent was charged but sawkārs and wealthy men escaped with 4 per cent, because it was bad policy to kill the goose that laid the golden egg Panacharī was charged for the grazing of animals on government lands Camels paid 8 annas, buffaloes 4 annas, cows 2 annas, sheep and goats 1 anna per month Gutta or ijāreh sharāb was paid annually by each distiller upon his profits Amīnī was a fee charged for the settlement of disputes It was also called chouth because the fee was one-fourth of the sums disputed between parties

A few instances of how this oppressive and comprehensive system of taxation worked will illustrate its incidence¹ Carless quotes an incident that he witnessed with his own eyes, 'soon after we embarked,' he says, 'at its mouth (Kēdywāree River) several Karāchi fishing boats came in from the sea and made fast to the bank near us But they had not been there long before two Balooch soldiers made their appearance to demand a share of the fish An altercation ensued but the fishermen were bound to comply and after throwing on shore several fine large fishes they all quitted the boat in great disgust'² This was the levy of the Shikār-i-māhī in operation The fishing industry was very thoroughly taxed, as we know from an official document This says, 'There were thirteen separate cesses at Karāchi exacted by the tax farmer on fishermen'³ There were cesses also on tanner's bark cut by the fishermen themselves or purchased in town, on jungle wood for burning, on jungle wood for building, on boats with charcoal, a tax on every boat quitting Karāchi harbour for Bombay or Muscāt, on tindal, serang, cook and khalāsīs, a tax on every dōnda proceeding to Keamāri for cargo, an export tax of 20 per cent on fish by the land route, a tax of 9 per cent on fish taken to camp for sale, a tax

¹ The paper manufacturers of Lārkāna had to pay a poll tax of Rs 8-12-0 per annum James op cit

² Bombay Government Records, Selections XVII, New Series, Part II, p 596

³ Account of the Fisheries of Sind by John Macleod, Collector of Customs, Karāchi, 1847 Bombay Government Records, Selections XVII, New Series, Part II, p 704

on twigs used in the walls of houses. On fish of all descriptions exported to Darājah, Shihbunder and Sōn Mānī of a value of one hundred rupees a duty was levied equal to Rs. 13-10-0 per cent.

Pottinger describes the working of the *ijārah* system of custom farming in Karāchi. In 1809 the Hindu customs farmer paid into the treasury ninety-nine thousand rupees and himself received twelve thousand, and in 1816 the amount paid in was one lakh twenty-three thousand and the *ijāradār* obtained nearly twenty thousand for his trouble. It was little wonder that a system of taxation so oppressive, collected by means of tax farmers through the agency of a multitude of corrupt petty officials backed by the Balūch soldiery, made the Government far from popular with the common man, who, now that peace reigned over the land, might have expected to retain some of the profits of his labour, industry and skill. Almost every kind of modern taxation was employed in some form or other in this most comprehensive system which forced rich and poor alike to pay heavily to the Government treasury. Had the proceeds of this taxation been employed generously on public works and on education, there would have been something to say in favour of it. But the money thus wrung from the pockets of the populace was employed to enrich the ruling house and to enable it to amass great stores of jewels and treasure for personal aggrandizement, pleasure and display.

III *The administration of justice*

Sind was a Muslim state and in theory justice was administered according to the tenets of the Korān. In practice, however, the Shariat did not suffice to cover adequately the field of jurisprudence. The Korān is not a legal code, and not the combined force of sunna, *ijmā* and *qiyās* was adequate for dealing with day-to-day problems of law and order, criminal and civil jurisdiction, and the demands of equity. Much of course was achieved by the *Qānūn-i-sharī* and *Qānūn-i-urf*, but it would be idle to pretend that the *kāzī* in seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind performed the functions of the magistrate and the criminal and civil courts of today. In Moghul and Kalhōro days every man was to some extent the defender of his own rights. He took the law into his own hands as the speediest solution of his problem. The evidence already cited in this book will prove how ineffectively ran the writ of the Great Moghul and the Kalhōro prince. Judged by present-day standards the police force was lamentably insufficient. The police were in the hands of the subordinate revenue officials. They were miserably armed and miserably mounted. A dozen of these poor creatures were considered sufficient for any large town. The medieval system of

collective responsibility for the malefactor prevailed everywhere 'The principle was that the people of a township or parish were answerable for every offence committed within their borders and were bound within forty days either to produce the body of the offender, or else make good the damage and pay a fine'¹ This is not a description of Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but of medieval England The description, however, might very well apply word for word to the Sind of Moghul and Kālhōro days For in Sind the system prevailed that the village or locality was responsible for stolen property traced to it and proved not to have gone beyond it

The Kōtwāl was the chief functionary invested with executive police powers but his jurisdiction did not usually extend far beyond the town or larger village where he was stationed and where he held a small court for administering summary punishment Sind contained then many expert thieves, and, as a sort of natural compensation, equally expert trackers (pagīs or pērīs) capable of following the footprints of camel, horse or man over miles of countryside A stranger arriving at a village could claim the protection of the village watchman and if he lost his property, the responsibility for the loss lay on the village The machinery of the law consisted of kārḍārs who decided cases according to the Korān, which was expounded by muftīs, who were learned in such lore The death penalty was but seldom inflicted Mutilation by chopping off the left hand or cutting off ears and nose was almost the extreme form of punishment The government was, however, usually ready to commute these barbarous penalties for a suitably heavy fine 'The apprehension and detection of criminals,' says James, 'devolved principally upon the injured party' If the zamīndār to whose village a thief was traced produced the thief the latter was robbed of the whole of his property, and the surplus, over what was claimed by the person who had been robbed, was carried to the credit of the government If the thief was poor he was thrown into prison until his friends made good the claim against him and the fine to government' A particularly revolting part of this punishment of malefactors was the custom of making prisoners beg for their maintenance and any surplus over bare maintenance that the prisoners succeeded in getting in alms became the perquisite of the kōtwāl² It was perhaps because of these effective methods of bringing the crime home to the offender that crime was, comparatively speaking, so little rife in Sind if one is prepared to make two qualifications, first, in respect of the almost universal pastime of stealing cattle, which

¹ *The Story of Scotland Yard*, by Sir Basil Thomson, pp 11-12

² Burnes says 'It is not unusual to see prisoners attended by their guards begging for subsistence in the public streets' *op cit.*, p 141

was regarded generally more as a form of clever amusement and dexterity than a crime,¹ and, second of the wildness of the Balūchī tribes, many of them half civilized who indulged in armed forays and plundered and murdered at their will. It was to provide against these unwelcome gentry that watch towers were erected in the villages and sometimes in the fields and that many villagers had 'kōts' or high walls within which some shelter was possible.

In a semi-barbarous land trial by ordeal was practised. James gives several instances of this. 'The ordeal of fire and water was frequently resorted to in cases where the prisoner declared his innocence and there was no direct proof. The trial by water (tubī) was as follows. The accused was placed under water whilst a man shot an arrow from a bow as far as he could. Another man was sent to pick it up and if the prisoner could remain under water until the arrow was brought back to the spot he was declared innocent. The trial by fire (charr) was equally difficult. A trench was dug seven cubits in length and filled with firewood which was lighted and the accused, with his legs and feet bound, had to go from one end to the other through it, his escape from injury deciding his innocence.' Under the Tālpūrs there were no regular civil courts. Litigants were mostly referred to the k̄āzī or panchāyat or to munsiffs selected by the parties. The chief cases decided by the k̄āzī were disputes concerning hereditary property, marriage claims and the like. They were dealt with under the principles of Muhammadan law. The k̄āzī decided which party should take the oath and gave a written finding, which was drawn up very carefully and had all the authority of the rulers' sanad. Panchāyats dealt with disputes between Hindus, usually in cases where there was a question of local custom involved. The panchāyat was presided over by the mukhī and a smaller committee was the instrument of investigation and decision. Munsiffs were employed on other matters by Muhammadans and Hindus alike. Sometimes written documents were put in, sometimes a case was decided by one party taking the oath and his opponent consenting. The munsiff was regarded with great respect and his decisions were rarely called in question. The munsiff was often employed to settle boundary disputes, which he did by calling on one of the parties to take the oath with the Korān on his head. The munsiff produced a written decision which was given to the successful litigant. Another way of settling boundary disputes about islands along the Indus was more primitive. It

¹ Bartle Frere said in 1853 'Cattle stealing, however, is hardly regarded as a crime and murders generally arising from quarrels about women are commoner than in India, p. 662. Bombay Government Records, Selections XVII, New Series Part II.

consisted of letting pots float down the river to see on which bank they came to rest Burnes¹ has some very pertinent observations on the administration of justice He says, 'As the state religion of Scinde is taken from the Korān, so the system of jurisprudence is derived from the same source and when exercised between two subjects of the more favoured creed would appear to be pretty fairly administered by the k̄āzī The administration of justice costs little or nothing to the state The Hindus for the most part settle their differences among themselves by panchāyats or arbitration without a reference to the public authorities The Balūchīs seem generally to take the law into their own hands and to act on the simple principle of retaliation'

¹ Burnes op cit, pp 140 1

CHAPTER V

THE PRIVILEGED CLASSES

The working of privilege—(a) The landed classes

THE Moghul Empire was ruled by fear and favour. The strong were forced by circumstances to seek the help of the weaker. Else the administration would have ceased to function. This meant the wholesale creation of privilege. The Kalhōra, weak followers of Moghul models, with less strength behind them and controlled by the fanaticism of an ignorant populace, were even more dependent on the existence of privileged classes. It was the Kalhōra's practice of deferring to the priestly class that led to the extraordinary reverence for pīrs, Sayids and holy men, which may be said to have been the predominant characteristic of eighteenth century Sind. The privileged classes under Moghul and Kalhōro were (omitting the Government officials) the jāghīrdārs, the zamīndārs, the Sayids, fakīrs, pīrs and holy mendicants, and the most powerful Balūch tribes which could not be antagonized¹. The predominance of the Balūch, however, as a privileged class did not become pronounced until well into the Kalhōro regime.

The system of land tenure in Sind, so far as is known, has always been feudal. In all feudal systems the chief method by which the overlord assured himself of the homage of his vassals was by the grant of fiefs. In Sind these grants took a great variety of forms. The two classes most important in the scheme were the jāghīrdārs, the holders of jāghīrs, and the zamīndārs, the holders of land on payment of the assessment fixed. In Sind the term jāghīr has been used to cover a large number of differing types of holding, but in essence the jāghīrdār held his land either entirely free or on payment of a small rent and was entitled to collect for himself the land assessment. Jāghīrs were granted principally to chiefs who provided armed retainers, to officials who discharged public duties, to menials who performed

¹ The length to which privilege went can be realized from the statement of Winchester in his topographical report on the city of Tatta and its environs in 1839, where he says that the following tribes were exempted from taxes unless engaged in trade in which case only half the ordinary duty and custom was exacted.

Sayids Rājwī or Mahadvi Sīkhlaī Sūfī Meerukhī Amīrkhānī, Shūrāzī, Bokhārī, Lōdī Mūlla, Abbāsī Kāzī Mooftī Ākhund, Jhōkia, Bakhali, Butteārah Halālkhōr Junkra, Jutī (fishmongers) and Brahmins Sāraswat, Pōkarna and Hussamī and all mendicants and priests. Bombay Government Records, Selections XVII, New Series Part II, p. 273.

domestic services and to courtiers who had won the favour of the court. A jāghīr, however, differed from a plain gift (inām) in that it involved obligations which terminated with the death of the jāghīrdār and the sanad was called in and had to be regranted to a successor at the will of the ruler. An inām was a free irreclaimable gift. The area of land held in jāghīr and inām was estimated¹ in 1847 by the Commissioner in Sind at one-tenth of the total area of the Government land. Policy in respect of jāghīrs varied and Mr Ellis² remarked that 'the Tālpūrs, though liberal in their grants to their own immediate retainers and dependants, were not remarkable for generosity in confirming grants of their predecessors. Certain grants in the old Shikārpūr Collectorate (in Sukkur district) were found to be traceable to the time when the Afghāns had possession of Upper Sind'. Afghān settlers, favoured by the rule of their own countrymen, purchased land from the indigenous population and sometimes bought new land under cultivation. The new cultivators wishing to secure a light assessment petitioned their sovereign and obtained puttās (leases) for the cultivation of certain lands on payment of a stipulated sum or on condition of the remission of the Government demand. On the annexation of Sind the British recognized three kinds of these alienations, first, jāghīrs which had been held from antiquity, and were allowed to continue hereditarily, second, puttadārī holdings of old standing, and third, grants of a religious or charitable character (wakf). The first class, jāghīrs, were held mostly by Balūch chiefs of influence and importance. The puttadārīs, in Upper Sind especially, are held mostly by Afghān settlers dating from the time of Nādir Shāh, and even earlier from the days of the Arghūns and Tarkhāns³. But I am myself familiar with at least one case of a claim of puttadārī by a Hindu descendant of an Āmil in the service of the Government.

The religious and charitable grants were at the disposal of mosques, Sayids, pīrs, fakīrs and holy men of all descriptions. Garden grants were a common feature and a useful one. The Commissioner in Sind reported of them, 'These gardens were to be found throughout the whole province and consisted chiefly of allotments in the

¹ Bombay Government Records. Revenue Arrangement Sindh, Vol. 203.

² *ibid*, Selections LXVI, New Series, p. 45.

³ Upper Sind at the period of the sack of Delhi by Nādir Shāh formed part of the sūbah of Multān. On the dismemberment of the Empire of Delhi the portion named Moghulī, comprising Sukkur, Bakhar and Shikārpūr and its dependencies, was annexed to the Durānī kingdom founded by Ahmad Shāh Abdālī. At that time the Afghān possessions in Sind extended to the north-east of Kashmōre on the Multān frontier, north to Rajkan and the desert and south to Mundaī on the Lārkāna river. Report by Major Goldney on Shikārpūr Collectorate, p. 688. Bombay Government Records, Vol. XVII, New Series.

neighbourhood of towns. Planted by their owners or their fathers, they were in the hands of all classes, from influential Balūch jāghīrdār or Afghān puttadār down to the poorest faquir or gosāin. Some assumed the form of "topes" or groves. All were, however, more or less public benefits created by private cost and labour. It was owing to them that the way-side traveller did not lack shelter, shade, refreshment and repose.¹ Amongst the tribes amongst whom jāghīrdārs were to be found were Tālpūrs, Nizamīnis, Laghūris, Marris, Jamūlis, Bhugrāis, Bhagrānis, Rinds, Chīngs, Chalgaris, Lashūris, Nuhīnis, Lunds, Kalvīs, Jettōrs, Nundīnis, Jelūlīnis, Khōsas, Khōl hars, Abras, Katiāns, Sāvids, Pīrs and Pathāns. The vast majority of these are Balūchī tribes.

If the jāghīrdārs were the princes of the privileged autocracy, the zamīndārs occupied the position of a honourable middle class. The zamīndār played an important part in the social system. He paid the revenue, he made regular advances to the cultivators, and he enjoyed a large number of feudal privileges in respect of the husbandmen who tilled his land and took their share of the produce for their pains. He had enough of the good things of life to keep him contented, horses for riding, a gaily caparisoned camel or two for display, an 'ōtāk' where he talked with his friends, bhang to smoke in his hookah, palāo and ghōsht for special feasts and a considerable latitude in his relations with the womenfolk, though this might have serious consequences now and again. Over his zamīndārī the zamīndār had a great deal of dictatorial power which he knew well how to use.² He was in fact a petty feudal overlord with a territory that might run to several square miles. He gave his orders and he expected them to be carried out at once. 'The zamīndār', says Postans, 'was at liberty to let to parties under him any portions of the land he proposed to cultivate, but he was always held individually responsible for the revenue of the whole'.³ He paid his workpeople of every description in grain, even the carpenter who mended the wooden plough and the patwārī who weighed the grain at the time of batāī. In some places the zamīndār elected a sort of representative for the management of public affairs. He was called Mukhādam or Arbāb, a title that has not yet died out in Sind. The boundaries of the village 'dēh' were defined, but the fields were not separated from each other. The lands were held on

¹ Bombay Government Records, Vol LXII New Series p 170

For the working of the zamīndārī system see *Sind Gazetteer* on the system prevailing in the Sahitī pargana

² Despite the fact that his extravagant habits led him continually into indebtedness to the Hindu money lender he had his own means of preserving his position and enforcing his will

³ Postans *Personal Observations on Sind*, p 238

the tenure common throughout many parts of India, of undisturbed occupancy as long as the revenue was paid at the settled rate. The settlement was made usually with the zamindār individually and rarely with a village jointly. The zamindār had also duties to the government in respect of detection of criminals and arrest of them, and his intelligence system was usually good enough to keep him informed of thefts by men of his own holding or by men of neighbouring holdings, in which the universal sport of cattle stealing proceeded without check. The zamindār also was powerful enough, usually, to procure the murder of his enemy if he wanted, and it was always very difficult to bring the crime home on the instigator. The zamindārs, however, did not care much to assist the investigation of crime for several good reasons. They did not want to be cited as witnesses as this lowered their 'ābrū' (reputation) and forced them to take sides. They were thereby frequently treated with disrespect and might find themselves at the mercy of a dishonest tracker who alleged that he had traced the stolen property to their land. Furthermore, if the zamindār was himself in any way implicated indirectly in a crime he had good reasons for not placing himself at the beck and call of the kārdār, the Āmil, the mukhtīār-kār or the kōtwāl. The countryside, however, was prepared to accept the importance of the zamindār's position and to treat him with deference accordingly. He was a kind of father confessor to his husbandmen and his influence was often able to settle their never-ending disputes about women, and the theft of cattle. He was in fact a kind of country squire on whom depended largely the co-operative agriculture of the zamindārī and whose word was, within certain limits, regarded as law.

(b) *The religious hierarchy*

So much for the privileged classes of the landed aristocracy. There remained the much more formidable privileged class of the religious 'hierarchy'. The extent to which holy men or reputed holy men were revered and pampered in Sind is almost outside the bounds of credibility. This was the least satisfactory feature of the Sind social structure. There was a Persian proverb about Multān that applied equally to Sind that it consisted of heat, dust, beggars and tombs. The aphorism was certainly true of Moghul and later still truer of Kalhōro and Tālpūr days. The facts admit of no dispute and are extremely unedifying. The Sayids, the Pirs, the Pīrzādas, the Kalandars, the Sūfis and a host of others were the real power in the land. No ruler could afford to neglect them and all were afraid of them. The reason lay in the peculiar psychology of the Sindhī Muslim peasantry. The social religion of Sind was built up round the reverence of the murīd for the murshīd, and the

sanctity of the Pir. The system goes back for its roots to the beginning of Islām, but few Muslim have carried a respect for sanctity so far. Sir Alexander Burnes remarked, 'Nothing more arrests the notice of a stranger on entering Sind than the severe attention of the people to the forms of religion as enjoined by the prophet of Arabia. I have observed a boatman quit the laborious duty of dragging the vessel against the stream and retire wet and covered with mud to perform his genuflections. In the smallest villages the sound of the Muazzin or crier summoning true believers to prayers may be heard and the Muhammadans within reach of the summons' sound suspend for the moment their employment that they may add their Amen to the solemn sentence when concluded.' All this is admirable and shows a deep and profound respect for the tenets of faith. But the practical results were not so encouraging. Dr Burnes said, 'There is no country in Asia or rather on earth that is so perfectly priestridden. It is said to possess no fewer than one hundred thousand tombs of saints', and MacMurdo estimated the expense of the ecclesiastical establishments at one third of the gross revenue enjoyed by the state. Crowe,² writing shortly after the Kalhōra were displaced said, 'There is no zeal but for the propagation of the faith, no spirit but in celebrating the Id, no liberty but in feeding Sayids and no taste but in ornamenting old tombs.' Elliot says, 'Much of the conquered land was, during the whole course of the Arab occupation, liberally bestowed upon sacred edifices and institutions as wakf or mortmain, of which some remnant dating from the earlier period is found even to this day. The large population of Sayid families are due to the Alī refugees, some of whose descendants settled at Lakhāri (Lak alāvi) and Matīari (Mat alāvi) and as mujāwars of the tomb of Lāl Shāhbāz at Sehwan exercised much influence. Many Sayids of Eastern India traced their first settlements to Tatta, Bakhar and other places in the Indus valley.'³ The populace showed a superstitious respect for Sayids. Burnes remarked, 'The meanest wretch who can boast his origin from the holy stock enjoys a place in society higher than temporary rank can bestow. Among the crowds who came to me for medicine all readily gave place to the Sayids. No person under any provocation would dare to abuse or strike one unless at the risk of being torn to pieces by the populace, and, in consequence of the privileges and immunities they enjoy, they flock from all the neighbouring centres into Sind where they are a constant tax on the poorest of the inhabitants.'⁴ His brother, Sir Alexander Burnes, says, 'The

¹ Quoted in Dr Burnes's book, op cit

² Crowe p 23 MSS Selections No 93 of 1802

³ Elliot I, p 481

⁴ Burnes op cit, p 75

about the undesirable nature of many 'excesses of popular superstition shown in Tatta in the dancing of dardishes before the shrine of Shaikh Patta, Shaikh of Shukhs'. This custom, however much opposed to the laws of Islām,¹ he says 'has been transmitted from generation to generation and all attempts of wise teachers and just governors have never succeeded in putting a stop to it'. The real form and meaning of Islām in Sind is not to be found in these ebullitions of popular and incredible fanaticism but is to be read in the beautiful spiritual poems of Shāh Abdul Latīf. It will be most unfair to judge Sind by the former and forget the latter. Pottinger, commenting on this feature of Sind Muslim psychology, goes so far as to say, 'The whole of the religion may be summed up in their liberality to Sayyids, Fakirs and other religious mendicants who overrun the entire country and whose self-will and insolence is not to be controlled by the Amīrs themselves. Their possessions are very great in the country and they have great establishments at Sehwan, Hālakhandī and other places where they have the absolute right of collecting customs and transit dues'. At Moghulbhīn the fishing rights had to be granted to a mosque and there were many other instances of valuable alienations in favour of the priestly caste. I think there can be little doubt that the tendency to pamper holy men became more pronounced under the Kalhōra who were typical Sindhis and themselves invested with a halo of sanctity as murshids, in view of their descent from the sainted Ādam Shāh. The Tālpūrs could do nothing to check this tendency. They added indeed to the number of the privileged classes by granting farms and showing extraordinary preference to the Balūchī tribes whom they were afraid to oppose.² The Kalhōra were men able to dominate the Balūchīs. 'During the period when the sacred tribe of Kalhōra brought under their control nearly all districts, Gujerāt on the eastern bank of the Indus, the Karmatis and Jōkhis towards the sea, the Nūmrias between the villages of Shaul and Jinger and the Chāndias along the hills above Sehwan still maintained their independence or became tributaries of Khurasān and were never even by the Tālpūrs more than partially subdued'.³ The records show

¹ Elliot I, p. 274

² The habits of the Balūchīs had not changed from the days of Withington (1613) or the days of Aurangzēb's Governorship of Multān (1648-52). Withington's words are memorable. 'These are a people that deal much in camels and in these parts most of them are robbers on the highway and also on the river murdering such as they rob. About the time I was in Scinda the Balūchīs took a boat wherein were seven idolators and one Portugale friar, which fought with them and were slain every man. Withington, op cit. p. 220

³ Letter from Captain Pelly 1-1-1856. Bombay Government Records, Vol. LXII New Series p. 104

that in Karāchi several Balūch tribes were exempt from taxation Del Hoste gives an interesting example of how powerful Balūchīs had become When he was at Hyderābād two camels belonging to Lieutenant Morris were stolen during the night from near the officers' tent When the theft was discovered trackers were called in who traced the animals to the tents of Balūchīs some distance away¹ The matter was investigated by the Kōtwāl and, despite clear proof of the theft and the guilt of the thieves, the Mīr said he was powerless to get them restored but would replace the camels himself by two others altogether From this and other evidence which is too voluminous to cite it is impossible not to agree with Pottinger's conclusion that the population of Sind could be divided into three classes the first was the privileged class consisting of Amīrs, Chiefs, Balūchīs, Sayīds and religious mendicants, the second, of the pastoral agricultural and other Mussulmān tribes found all over Sind in the rural areas and constituting the majority of the population, and the third, of the Hindus who were ' tyrannized over in the most infamous and open manner by all classes of Mussulmāns ' ² The plain facts were that theun privileged classes had to support, in the manner already described, by their toil and industry the privileged so that the latter could lead lives of display, extravagance and indolence

(c) *The change from Moghul to Kalhōra regimes*

Comparing conditions under the Kalhōra with conditions under the Moghuls, we can find a subtle change in the categories of the privileged classes The great granting of privilege to religious persons began to be pronounced under the Kalhōra, as distinct from the ordinary Muslim system of wakf which had existed from the original Arab conquest The Moghuls did not exempt Balūchīs, at least in theory, from the taxation imposed on Muslim subjects generally, though it is far from likely that they were very successful in collecting the full demand from these tribesmen Thus, while under the Moghuls the privileged classes consisted of the feudatory chiefs and officials, many of the latter being foreigners, the rest of the population, Hindu and Muslim, were obliged to pay what the state demanded, the Hindus being subjected to certain taxes and exactions as non-Muslims, according to the practice of Aurangzēb Under the Kalhōra, however, it became no longer necessary to support an alien Moghul bureaucracy The position of privilege formerly occupied by the Moghul aristocracy was taken by the

¹ Del Hoste op cit , p 26

² For the maltreatment of Hindus see Pottinger, Postans, Burnes and Burton *passim*

rulers themselves, the jārhūdārs and leading zamindārs. Sāwīs and fakīrs began to be treated with respect which the taxation system acknowledged while the ordinary cultivating and pastoral classes, the true Sindhis, the Jāts and camelmen, the fishermen and hunters, were fully exploited.

The Hindus' position deteriorated still further. They came to be regarded as a sort of gold mine to be drawn upon at will. All the wandering immigrants, mostly Hindus from Gujārāt, Jaisalmīr and Mīrwar, who entered Sind became thereby liable to the taxes that fell upon the indigenous Muslim population. The Balūchīs were by this time becoming too powerful to tax properly and claimed immunity from the taxation that pressed on the indigenous Muslim population. This immunity they became more and more successful in obtaining. Thus the system was in essence less just than that of the Moghuls. But, as Postans has remarked, the common people were reconciled to it and had no means of resisting. The Hindus regarded the numerous demands upon them as a sort of capricious income tax and doubtless they managed to pass some of them on to the consumer, as without the Hindus as traders and accountants the commerce of the country would have stood still and the revenue system would have been unworkable. It happened thus that Hindus continued to live in Sind advancing money to the zamindār class, financing trade and commerce, farming the revenue, and owning all the petty shops in the villages. There is no doubt that many of them became rich, though they had to adopt all kinds of subterfuges to conceal their wealth. It is not a pleasant picture. But this condition of affairs was inevitable with a capricious autocracy ruling the land, and an exceedingly ill-balanced distribution of labour between the agriculturist and trader on the one hand and between the privileged and the unprivileged sections of society on the other. As the privileged sections possessed all the power and controlled all the military strength, the unprivileged had no option but to accept their fate with resignation. It was this characteristic of the government of Sind which provoked the numerous diatribes of English critics in the early years of the nineteenth century. But the plain fact simply was that the social condition of the country was due to the gradual disintegration of the Moghul system influenced by the psychological attitude of complaisance shown by the Muslim populace in respect of autocratic government and its reverence for holy men. In such circumstances the trading and commercial elements were crushed as between the upper and nether millstones. A quasi-theocratic state, dependent on an unsound division of labour of this kind, could have taken no other form.

men much respected by the commonalty in spite of discrepancy of belief. Under the Kalbōro dynasty they became possessed of large landed estates granted as *inām* in perpetuum'. The Savids of Sind showed some unusual peculiarities. They would not allow their daughters to marry Muslims of less dignified stock than their own. If either of the parents was a Savid, the children must be called Sayids too. There was in this way a considerable watering-down of the original Arab, Persian, Turk and other Asiatic strains in them.

Throughout the Muslim domination of Sind for eight centuries there was a continual recruitment of the saintly families from outside. It is possibly this fact, taken in conjunction with the

superstitious hero-worship of the common people of Sind, which explains the extraordinary influence which they wielded. To understand the reason for this we must go farther back into Sind history. The facts are, however, very obscure. The indigenous population of the Lower Indus valley in the eighth century consisted of Hindu races speaking a Sanskritic language. During the days of the Arab occupation the land was held by Arab garrisons supported by grants of land. 'They were probably', says Ray, 'mainly concentrated in the important cities. The internal administration of the country was necessarily left largely in the hands of the Hindu landlords paying the land tax (kharāj) and the capitation tax (jizyā)'¹. 'Towards the end of the tenth century Islām in Sind appears to have been influenced by a wave of Qarmatian heresy from Egypt and Irāq. In the beginning of the eleventh century Mahmūd of Ghaznī found both Multān and Mansūrah in the occupation of this Ismailī sect. From the first quarter of the eleventh century onwards the Arabs began to be displaced by Turks from the north while the local administration remained in the hands of petty local Hindu chiefs'². Most of the population was converted to Islām in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, though the ruling autocracy of Sūmra appears to have been converted earlier. Some time in the early eleventh century (circa A.D. 1025) the Hindu tribe of Sūmra became the rulers of Sind. In 1228 Mālik Sinān-ud-dīn Chatisar, the then Sūmro prince, submitted to Junaydī, the general of Iltutmish and became a vassal of the Delhi Sultān. According to Hasan Nizāmī 'Coinage was struck and prayers read in the name of Shamsuddin as far as Qasdār and Mekrān'. It is clear from the name that the ruling family had already adopted Islām. Elliot (I, 491) believes that they were tainted by the heresy of the Qarmatis by the eleventh century A.D. In the middle of the fourteenth century the Samma displaced the Sūmra (Elliot, III, 322). The Āin-i-Akbarī states that the Sūmra (Rājput) line of thirty-six princes reigned for five hundred years. But research has established that the probable duration of the Sūmra régime was from circa 1025 to circa 1360, though there is confusion as to the exact dates and also as to the authority wielded over Upper and Lower Sind, which have had very different histories.

The Samma seem to have come from Cutch. In the Tārīkh-i-Tāhūrī it is stated that the labouring classes and landholders of the Samma held the Hindu faith. But Elliot shows (I, 266) that they were very strange Hindus, because they never drank wine without partaking of a young buffalo calf. 'The Samma took the title of Jāms and their latest and greatest capital Tatta was founded

¹ *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 21

² *ibidem*, p. 22

on a lucky day settled by Brahmans and astrologer¹ (Iliot, III, 273). During the days of Jām Nizāmuddin, also called Jām Nundo, who flourished about A.D. 1361, Islām spread widely over Sind and the mass of the common people became Muslim.

These facts seem to establish the interesting conclusion that, while the earlier leading families of Sind were influenced by Shī'as and many of the saintly families continued to be so influenced for many centuries, when the mass Sunni conversions occurred they did so amongst a population deeply wedded to Hindu practices and Hindu superstitions. The result was twofold, first to break down very considerably the clear-cut distinction between Sunnī and Shī'a which elsewhere runs like a knife edge through Muslim society and second, to make it inevitable that Islām, as far as the common people were concerned, would be to a great extent influenced by Hindu predilections. It is stated of Shāh Abdul Latīf that, when questioned whether he was a Sunnī or a Shī'a, he replied that he was between Sunnī and Shī'a¹. In reality he was more a Shī'a than a Sunnī, because he intended at a later stage of his life to make the pilgrimage not to Mecca but to Kerbela. The existence of a large number of unorthodox practices in the religion of the common people in Sind must almost certainly be due to Islām's being unable in a few hundred years to cast off the superstitions of a pre-Islāmic belief. The fact remains that right up to the time of Burton the austerity of the Arab religion was toned down by practices which were frowned on by the educated Mussulmāns. Whether the exaggerated respect for the pīr is due to the remains of Hindu influences of hero-worship cannot be predicated but it is possible that some such influence has been at work in Sind. Another form that popular belief took was to carry to extremes what is little less than worship of the dead. How are we to explain the extraordinary phenomenon of Hindus visiting Mussulmān shrines and making votive offerings at them, and the general easy-going character of Sind orthodoxy? The question is important because the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf, while itself in the true tradition of Islāmic mysticism, nevertheless exercises over Hindus in Sind a spell almost as complete as that exercised by it over Muslims. The complex religious history of the country has therefore produced some surprising results: an almost incredible veneration for Sayids as such, a great accretion of superstitious practice in the belief of the multitude, and a common basis of understanding, by Muslim and Hindu alike, of the mystical message of Islām as expounded in the teachings of the Sindhi Muslim mystics.

Before dealing with the life of Shāh Abdul Latīf we must examine a little more closely the implications of these facts. As regards the

¹ Gurbuxānī *Shāh jā Rīsālo*, I, p. 50

veneration in which Sayids, pīrs and holy men were held, there is an overwhelming mass of evidence in the *Tuhfat-al-Kirām* and in the pages of Burton. The Sayid who was also a pīr exercised as a murshid over his murīds an almost regal power. The pīr was usually connected with some shrine. He was invested with the pag (turban). He sat, as on a throne, upon his holy seat, himself the gādīnīshīn before whom on saints' days the multitude came to offer obeisance. When he went on tour to visit his murīds his progress was one of almost regal magnificence. He rode a gaily caparisoned camel attended by bands of followers usually dressed in some kind of uniform and armed with an assortment of arms. The devout pressed forward for the honour of touching his stirrup leathers. The pīr had thus a spiritual power which was always tending to take temporal forms, exactly as happened in the most influential days of the papacy in medieval Europe. The pīr received the offerings of his murīds, settled their disputes often very satisfactorily, and led the prayers on solemn occasions. The countryside became in this way the home of an immense number of these petty imperia. The whole system was of course closely bound up with the theocratic, or, if the phrase may be used without criticism, the hierarchical organization of Islām, as elaborated through the centuries out of the simple foundation of faith laid by the Prophet of Arabia. The extravagance of many of these ebullitions of popular religion, however, often earned the disapproval of the more intellectually-minded of Muslim theologians. The Kalhōra were the murshids of the Tālpūrs. It was because of the hold they thus possessed over the Balūch shepherd tribe that the Kalhōra were able to use the Tālpūrs for their own political aggrandizement. When the Kalhōra commanded as murshids, the Tālpūrs as murīds had to obey. The veneration of the murīd for the murshid did not in essence have much to do with the personal character of the latter. In Islām, as in every other religion, many of the persons most venerated have in their personal character done little to merit the respect in which they were held. But human nature being what it is, and as the desire for personal power lies deep in the heart of most men, there was no help for occasional abuses under any system however strict. Actually, it was an outrageous act by a Kalhōro which shocked the public opinion of the day and led to the displacement of the Kalhōra, the murshids, by the Tālpūrs, their murīds. The abuse of veneration could not, therefore, be carried beyond the limits which the public conscience would tolerate.

As regards the accretion of superstitious practice upon the plain austerity of Islām in Sind the evidence is overwhelming. Many instances can be cited from the *Tuhfat-al-Kirām*. In his *Folklore*

to some sacred shrine or no' man in Sind. James in his account of the Chāndōo Jan says: 'Near Shāncādpūr there is a pair of large millstones in a garden about four feet in diameter. It is on the banks of the Dāto canal, so called from Dāto Khubā rār, a man renowned for his wealth and the canals dug by him, as for his unbounded liberality. He was Chāndōokah's Hātum of Tāryī. It is related of him that no one passed his door unaided and the above millstones are now considered sacred. For we are told that God was so pleased with his piety and liberality that even if a handful of gram was thrown in the supply of flour was equal to all demands. They are approached with bare feet and the precincts are kept in cleanliness and good order. There is a tomb over the remains of a celebrated pīr on poles, round which are seen the heelropes of horses. For whenever an animal in the neighbourhood is afflicted with disease the owner prays at the tomb and on the recovery of the animal offers the heelropes in gratitude for the saint's assistance. If a person breaks a branch of the tree which overshadows the tomb he is supposed to be doomed to meet with some mishap.'²

² Burton, pp. 229-30. = James op cit. in Bombay Government Records

Khizr, or Ēlās, was supposed to have drunk of the fountain of the waters of life and believed not to die till the last trump Khwājo Khizr was for this reason called in Sind Zinda Pīr (The Living Pīr) He had a shrine on an island in the Indus at Sukkur He was the patron saint of waters and rivers and hence had come to be regarded as the god of the river Indus Muslims offered him oblations of lamps and flowers These were launched upon the river on Thursday evenings in the fifth month of the solar year At this time there was held the festival of the Bēra (raft) when a raft was launched upon the river in honour of him ¹ In the mosque of Khwājo Khizr at Sukkur there is an inscribed stone dating from A D 952-3 which reads

' Know, that when this fabric was raised
Khwājo's waters encompassed it about
This pleasing hemistich Khizr wrote
" In the court of God the date is found " ²

Burton gives more particulars of this strange river cult, in which Islām and Hinduism are curiously intermingled He also quotes at length a hymn in honour of the river Indus

The debasement of Islām found in these and similar practices seems undoubtedly to have been due to the popular religion of the indigenous Sindhis, sometimes called Jats The Jats constituted the majority of the population It is thus quite clear that in the Islām practised by these people, very punctilious in the performance of external duties, there subsisted a vast body of superstitious belief dating from before the days of Islām

But let us pass from these extravagances of the personal religion of the unlettered multitude to the true achievement of the Sindhi genius in the life and poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf He is incomparably the greatest man whom Sind has yet produced in the realm of imaginative art The whole of the present work up to this point has been written solely for the purpose of making clear the kind of people amongst whom he lived and the historical background of their age Without a deep historical understanding of these matters no one unfamiliar with Sind as a country and unacquainted with the Sindhi language can hope to realize the depth of his genius or the meaning of his verse He is the real jewel of the Kalhōro age He has written poetry that deserves a wider public than it has yet attracted His life is an epitome of the age in which he lived and of the rural circumstances of the people amongst whom he dwelt The fact that since his poetry was composed it has retained its universal appeal proves that the spontaneity of his message lies deep in the

¹ Raverty *Mīhrān of Sind*, op cit , p 491

² *ibid* , p 492

hearts of all classes of Sind's population, Muslim and Hindu, lettered and unlettered. The reason must be that, despite the debasement of religion which we have just considered, there is in his poetry something of higher and nobler content in this exposition of Islām than can be depreciated by the extravagances of ignorance and superstition. In the second part of this work I shall endeavour to explain and interpret this meaning in the light of the circumstances of the poet's day with reference to the intellectual and mystical development of Islām.

II *The Life of Shāh Abdul Latif*

There is no really satisfactory account of Shāh Abdul Latif's life. Nor will there ever be. The facts of his life have been but sparsely recorded in script. Most of what is known comes from oral tradition. Until the eighties of last century it was still possible to trace oral tradition up to its source because old men were still alive who could recall what their grandfathers had told them and some at least of these grandfathers must have been contemporaries of the poet. Sayid-worship being however what it is, many of the items in the oral tradition must be treated with great caution. Many of them of the miraculous order must be ruled out altogether. They are merely part of the halo of a growing sainthood. Miracles of this kind are like fairies. They cease to exist when people no longer believe in them. The most competent student of Shāh Abdul Latif's life is Mirza Kalich Bēg. His assiduity was remarkable. He had the good fortune to be able to test for himself the quality of the oral tradition from the lips of men who had it from the lips of men who had seen Shāh Abdul Latif in the flesh and spoken with him. This source is now stopped. There is no likelihood of any further accretion of hard facts though this will not prevent the oral tradition from developing further. Many of the facts collected by Mirza Kalich Bēg are prefaced by some such phrase as 'Men say that' or 'They write that'. We must, therefore, employ the tests of evidence to compute their worth. Professor Gurbuxānī's edition of the *Risālo* represents the latest scholarship on the poet and his poetry. Some enquiry of the kind conducted by Mirza Kalich Bēg was made also by Dāyarām Gidumal and Līlārām Watanmal. But there is little in their researches that cannot be found better in Mirza Kalich Bēg's work.

The exact dates of the poet's birth and death are not known. But the evidence is in favour of his having been born in 1689 and having died in 1752. His life coincided almost exactly with the change from Moghul to Kalhōro rule in Sind. When Aurangzēb died Shāh Abdul Latif was a youth of eighteen years of age. As a young man

before him was the famous Sayid Abdul Karīm (flourish circa A.D. 1600) whose durgāh was at Bulrī in the Gūnī Ţūlā of the Hyderābād district and is still a great place of yearly pilgrimage for its Shāh Karīm fair (mīrā) held on the sun's 'urs' day. It is not known how the family had migrated to Bulrī or why, in the generations immediately preceding Shāh Abdul Latīf's birth, it had returned to the vicinity of Matīārī. But the poet's father Sayid Habib Shāh, was living at a place called Hāla Hawēlī now in ruins, not far from Matīārī when Shāh Abdul Latīf was born. The poet was, therefore, born to a position of dignity and power as one of the privileged class treated with the superstitious respect described in a previous chapter. He was, as an Englishman might say, born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He himself never showed any personal desire to use his position unworthily. All through his life he evinced no liking for the comforts and elegances that appeal to worldly-minded men. His whole life was one of continence and abstemiousness then sufficiently rare amongst the race from which he sprang. He was characterized by a gentleness of manner and speech, an innate gentlemanliness, a bent of kindness, compassion and generosity which make him, as a man, a person worthy of the utmost respect. He is said to have hated cruelty and to have been unable to bear to beat an animal or cause physical pain to man or beast. In an age and amongst a population that set little store by chastity, he exhibited towards women a self-control that was remarkable. He left no heir, and the oral tradition, which in this respect there is no reason to disbelieve, records the decorum and dignity of his family life.

According to the oral tradition collected by numerous enquirers, the poet in his prime was a well-set-up, handsome, bearded man of average height with fine black eyes, an intelligent face, a noble forehead and the solemn look of a deep-thinking and penetrating mind overcast with thought. At Bhūt are still preserved several relics of him, the long stick he used to use when walking, his turban, a piece of cloth he wore, and the beggar's bowl of coconut husk from which he ate and drank frugally. The first years of his boyhood were spent at Hāla Hawēlī. Some time later his father, Shāh Habib, went to live in a nearby village called Kōtrī, which, like Hāla Hawēlī, is also in ruins today, and there Shāh Abdul Latīf spent some of the years of his adolescence. That ascetic trend of his nature which led him to frequent the company of holy men and spend days by himself in solemn contemplation did not accord with the position which his father deemed due to his son. But Shāh Abdul Latīf showed his mettle by living his life in his own way. For a person of that age he was well travelled. It is true that he did not travel far, but he visited some of the lands adjoining Sindh and

traversed a great part of Sind in his quest for religious truth. In this way he brought to the practice of his poetry a breadth of view which he could not have shown had he remained continuously in the centre of the self-satisfied Sayid society of those days established in the neighbourhood of Matiārī and Hāla.¹

A friend of his younger days was one Mirza Moghul Bēg, who, in 1713, died an untimely death at the hands of robbers and whose daughter he eventually married. The independent ways of the young ascetic and contemplative were certain to arouse the jealousy of the orthodox 'hierarchy', especially as the fame of the young man with his saintly manner of living was becoming known and was attracting to him a number of murīds. At this stage of his life, therefore, he found himself ranged against the Sayids of Matiārī who succeeded for a time in enlisting the support of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro, then the most powerful man in Sind. The Kalhōra, as I have already explained, were greatly influenced by the Sayids and the holy men whom they dared not antagonize. This fact must explain the early hostility of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro to a young religious leader of independent and unorthodox views. Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro, however, became later convinced of the sincerity and worth of this remarkable young man and attached himself to him in friendship. Indeed tradition likes to add that the birth of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro was the result of the blessing of Shāh Abdul Latīf.

By this time Shāh Abdul Latīf was showing the strength of his poetic fervour by the composition of some of his powerful poems which soon attracted the ready attention of an admiring public. The next stage of his life was marked by the further development of his genius, when he cut himself off from the old ties and founded a village of his own at a place called Bhit (sandhill), so called from its being built on sandhills, in the true ascetic spirit of the religious eremite. Bhit itself, though unattractive as a residence, was set in the midst of striking scenery. It was close to the Kīrar lake which was fed by the Alī Ganj or Pahar canal. There were several small sheets of water near by with trees and a certain richness of greenery not common in the arid land of Sind except in the immediate vicinity of the river or its large riverain branches. Mirza Kalich Bēg and Gurbuxānī give some account of the topography of Bhit as it was in Shāh Abdul Latīf's time. It was characteristic of the man that he helped to build the village with his own hands. The

¹ Gurbuxānī says that he visited the places of pilgrimage in Sind and Lakhpat, Gīrnār, Jaisalmīr, the hills on the western borders of Sind, Lāhut, Lāmakān, Hinglāj, Sabar Sakhī and even went to Kābul and Kandahār. But I do not know on what authority he holds that Shāh Abdul Latīf went so far. *Shāh jā Risālo*, Gurbuxānī's edition, I, p. 21.

whole episode had a vivid popular appeal enhanced by the fact that he was now reaching the summit of his power as poet and as a man of saintly reputation¹. The last years of his life were spent in a halo of sanctity in which the reverence of his followers for him played an important part. Thousands would come to listen to the magic of his poetry and to enjoy the beauty of its message. It is said that he had intended to make the pilgrimage to Kербela in the last few years of his life, but was dissuaded from doing so by the insistence of his followers that he should not desert them. Instead of going to Kербela Shāh Abdul Latīf is said to have composed the *Sur Kūdāro* which deals with the story of Hāsān and Husayn. It is recorded that shortly before his death he retired into solitude. Coming out again he performed his ablutions, put on a white sheet and ordered the singing of songs. When the music stopped, he fell into a reverie of divine contemplation².

How far Shāh Abdul Latīf was an educated man has proved a great puzzle to scholars. The popular tradition is that he had no regular education but taught himself everything. Popular tradition in this respect is, however, unreliable. His poems show clearly an acquaintance with Arabic and Persian far beyond the ordinary accomplishments of his time. It is certain that he was familiar with the work of Jalāluddīn Rūmī. Indeed it is related that Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro, from whom he had become estranged, won back the poet's favour by presenting him with a fine copy of the *Masnawī*. An imposing tomb was built for his body by Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro in 1754, according to the tradition, in the year that Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro died. Līlārām Watanmal states³ that the *Korān*, the *Masnawī* of Jalāluddīn Rūmī, and the *Sindhī* verses of Shāh Karīm were always in the poet's hands. If there is any truth in this story, and there probably is some, it would dispose of the assertion that the poet was not a well-educated man. The mystical form of his poetry could never have been achieved without a deep and sympathetic understanding of the mystical development of Islām that came to India through the work of the great Persian poets. Thus whatever the facts of Shāh Abdul Latīf's education may have been (and it is a typical conceit of hero worship to pretend that all knowledge came to him as a sort of special revelation) it is clear that his education was neither superficial nor contemptible. Tradition says that he did not write his poems at all but that they were collected and transcribed by amanuenses. This passes the

¹ His father Habīb Khān died in 1742 and was buried in Bhīt a few paces from where later in 1754 Shāh Abdul Latīf's own tomb was erected at the expense of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro.

² *Sharah Latīfī*, Part I, p. 7.

³ *Shāh Latīf* by Līlārām Watanmal, p. 11.

the embryo is such a trouble to my father—what will the full-blown adult be? May such a blow be suggested in the bed? The child we are told in consequence was still-born to the great grief of the mother and the Shīkh left no heir to revive him. Clearly the object of this fairy tale is to account for the poet's childlessness.

The fine mausoleum built for the poet's body by Ghulām Shīkh Kalhōro was ornamented by a well-known mason of the time—one Idan from Sakhar. Since the poet's death the poems have been recited weekly on Fridays in the mausoleum which has become a kind of holy shrine which still draws its crowd. Dāvarām Gidūmal describes his visit in 1882 to one of these 'vādes'. He says 'The deepest silence occasionally broken by a hearty "Allīhu" prevailed in the wide courtyard where I kept my memorable vigil with more than a hundred men, women and children. The subdued and tranquil look of these people—their simple habits—their gentle demeanour—their strong faith and their erect but humble attitude of mind made a very great impression upon me and inspired me with a most profound veneration and admiration for the poet-saint who was their recognized spiritual teacher and whose burning words and breathing thoughts moved them to tears.'²

¹ Dāvarām Gidūmal *Something about Sindh by Signa*, p. 42

² *ibid.*, p. 3

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G NOTE

- The extracts given from the Bombay Government Records relating to the Second Factory in Sind are taken from the Sind Factory Diary 1762-4 from Public Department Diaries from Secret and Political Department Diaries from Secretariat Inward Letter Books and from Mr Warden's Compilation in Extracts 1754-77 as shown in the footnotes under the various years (Abbreviated in notes as P.D.D., S.P.D. and S.I.L.B. respectively.)
- Some of the material later published by Burton in his *History of Sind* appears in the Bombay Government Records in the form of reports by Lieutenant Burton.
- Postans in his *Personal Observations on Sind* has incorporated (without clear acknowledgement) large portions of Mr Callendar's Narrative. In the same work Postans has reprinted as an appendix (pp. 361-74) the 'Official Report on the state and navigation of the Indus below Hyderabad' by Lieutenant Carless Indian Navy.

PART II

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APPENDIX II

THE SHIPS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY TRADING IN SIND DURING PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Names of vessels mentioned as being in the Sind trade about
1758-60

Defence (wrecked near Shāhbunder), Swallow, Drake, Bombay, Success, Revenge, Despatch, Tartar, Houghton, Stormont, Tiger

Marine Force for Service of Bombay (or Surat)

	Burthen computed at Merchants Tonnage	Number of European commanders or officers included	Number of Christian Topasses	Number of lascars or country sailors	Total number of seamen on board each vessel	Number of guns	Size of guns (pounders)
Revenge ship	470	100	20	40	160	20	12
Bombay grab	363	80	16	34	130	20	9
Drake ketch	220	40	12	24	76	14	6
Success ketch	145	16	10	16	42	12	4
Tartar grab	200	16	10	16	42	12	4
Tiger gallivat	43	2	2	16	20	5	1 = 2
Swallow galley	160	16	6	20	42	14	4 = 1 4

Notes on Vessels

Ship Revenge continues to be a very serviceable cruizer and a prime sailor, may last a number of years, she proceeded under the command of Admiral Steevens to the Coromandel coast in March last

Drake ketch continues a very serviceable cruizer and may last many years, she arrived from Bussorah the 22nd October since which she has been cleaned and repaired and is now ready for service

Success ketch continues a very useful cruizer, she sails prime well and may last many years with necessary repairs. She has been chiefly employed in conveying the trade, etc to and from the northward and cruising off the port

Su-alloo Talley proceeded to Burmah with despatches for Europe in March last and then to Ly guard ship at Gombroon.

Tartar grab She has been gone to Siam ever since the month of April last to Ly as a guard ship in that river during the monsoon but by stress of weather she was obliged to go from thence to Cutch where she remained for some time before she returned, she is a very useful cruiser and sails well and will last a number of years with common repairs. She is duly expected.

Tyger Galliat is still at Siam where she continues to be of great service, but is old and cannot last long.

Su-alloo and *Ty-rallits* are still employed to the northward and answer extremely well as they are both good stout vessels and may last a number of years.

(From Public Department Diary 35, 1760, pp 1030-43 Dated 31 December 1760)

APPENDIX III

TABLE SHOWING THE LENGTH, BREADTH AND DEPTH OF
THE CANALS IN THE CHĀNDOOKAH PURGUNNAH

Name of Canal	Length in yards	Breadth in feet		Depth in feet	
		Near the mouth	Towards the tail	Near the mouth	Towards the tail
Mittah or Nusrat	25,000	21	15	12	4
Heerah	22,000	10	7	9	3
Khyrah	28,000	15	12	9	5
Beerah	30,000	18	15	10	6
Dātah	42,000	21	10	9	4
Shāh	35,000	18	12	11	7
Maksoodah	25,000	15	8	9	5
Nourung	16,000	40	10	9	3
Chulah (continua- tion of above)	18,000	30	10	9	3
Meer wāh	15,000	15	8	8	3

Another statement shows the number of wells and minor
canals as follows —
Pukka wells, 997, kutchas wells, 264, temporary wells, 2,030,
minor canals, 877. The number of wells out of repair, 256
(included in total figures)

APPENDIX IV

TABLE SHOWING THE ESTIMATED RELATIVE VALUE OF
UNDER-MENTIONED CROPS TO THE CULTIVATOR

	Rupee per bigha for year 1845 7		
	1845 6	1846 7	1847 8
Sugar cane	60	60	30
Tobacco	8	5	17
Cotton (bho et)	1	1	8
(saltree)	5	10	5
Rice	44	18	13½
Pease etc	1½	10	6½
Wheat	1	10	6
Jowāree	5	10	5
Bājhree	4	7	3

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF THE CULTIVATION OF THE
PRINCIPAL GRAINS IN THE CHĀNDOOKAH PURGUNNAH
TAKEN FROM THE RETURNS OF THE SPRING, MIDDLE AND
AUTUMN CROPS, 1255 and 1256 A H (1845-6)

	Spring crop		Autumn crop		Middle crop	
	1255 Bighas	1256 Bighas	1255 Bighas	1256 Bighas	1255 Bighas	1256 Bighas
Pease	4,696	5 083				
Barley	4,631	4 246				
Wheat	4 200	4,250				
Gram	3 000	2,460				
Mustard	1 500	30				
Goolmasfar	9	11				
Jowāri			30,964	57 550		
Rice			40,000	34 000		
Bājhree			6,757	11,892		
Moong			2,500	3,470		
Koonjud			1,427	2,250		
Mandawah			124	250		
Cotton					8,475	7,239
Sugar					223	106
Indigo					19	10

APPENDIX V

SYNOPSIS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS USEFUL FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORICAL PART OF THIS WORK

Events in Sind History

Events in Indian History

- | | | | |
|---------|--|------|---|
| 1555 | Accession of Turkhāns Sack of Tatta by Portuguese | | |
| 1558 | Death of Ādam Shāh Kalhōro | | |
| 1592 | Defeat of Mirza Jānī Bēg Turkhān and annexation of Sind by Akbar | | |
| 1600 | 'Tawārikh-i-Sindh' written by Mir Muhammad Masūm of Bakhar | | |
| 1605 | Rise of the Dāūd-pōta in Shikārpūr and Upper Sind | 1605 | Death of Akbar and accession of Jahāngīr |
| 1613-14 | Visit of Nicholas Withington to Sind | 1613 | English factory established at Surat |
| 1621 | 'Tawārikh-i-Tāhīrī' written by Mir Tāhīr Muhammad Nasyānī | 1622 | Kandahār taken by Persians |
| 1625 | 'Bēqlarnāma' written by Amīr Sayid Kāsim Bēqlar | 1627 | Death of Jahāngīr and accession of Shāh Jahān |
| 1636 | English Factory established at Tatta | 1638 | Kandahār surrendered to Shāh Jahān |
| 1641 | Visit of Manrique to Sind | 1649 | Final loss of Kandahār |
| 1648-51 | Aurangzēb Governor of Multān and Sind | | |
| 1654-5 | Turkhān-Nāma' written by Sayid Jamāl | | |
| 1658 | Civil War between Aurangzēb and Dārā Shikōh ending in defeat of Dārā Shikōh and his death after pursuit through Sind | | |
| | Siege of Bakhar | | |
| | River War at Schwan | | |
| | Kalhōra begin to oppose the Moghul troops | | |
| 1662 | English Factory in Sind given up | 1659 | Enthronement of Aurangzēb |
| | | 1664 | Sack of Surat by Shivaji |
| | | 1666 | Death of Shāh Jahān |
| | | 1668 | Bombay transferred to East India Company |
| | | 1674 | Enthronement of Shivaji |

Events in Sind History

- 1758 English Company's Factory established at Tatta
- 1768 Foundation of Hyderābād
- 1767-8 and 1773 'Tuhfat-al-Kurām' written by Alī Shēr Kāma
- 1771 Death of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōra
- 1773 Accession of Tīmūr Shāh at Kābul
- 1775 Misgovernment in Sind English factory at Tatta given up
- 1776 Sarfarāz Khān Kalhōra deposed for misgovernment.
- 1778 Ghulām Nabī Khān Kalhōra becomes ruler of Sind
- 1778 Civil war between Kalhōra and Tālpūrs begins
- 1793 Death of Tīmūr Shāh
- 1803 Ascendancy of Tālpūrs finally established

Events in Indian History

- 1758 Marāthas occupy Punjāb
- 1760 Battle of Wandiwash defeat of the French by Coote Marāthas capture Delhi.
- 1761 Defeat of the Marāthas at Pānīpat by Ahmad Shāh Durāni
- 1764 Sikhs become masters of Lahore
- 1765 Clive obtains 'dīwāni' of Bengal for East India Company
- 1771 Warren Hastings Governor of Bengal
- 1776 War with Marāthas
- 1778 France declares war on Britain
- 1783 Treaty of Versailles French possessions in India restored
- 1793 War with France Permanent Settlement of Bengal East India Company's charter renewed
- 1799 Capture of Seringapatam and death of Tipu Sultān
- 1801 Annexation of the Carnatic
- 1817 Third and last Marātha War
- 1823 Ranjit Singh master of Multān Kashmir and Peshāwar

APPENDIX VI

NOTE ON THE SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION OF ORIENTAL WORDS

This work contains many transliterations of Arabic, Persian and Sindhi words. I have not thought it necessary or desirable in a book which is meant to appeal to the general reader to employ the system of transliteration approved by the Royal Asiatic Society. Thus I have not shown by diacritical marks the distinction between the various forms of the 'h', 's', 't', 'd' and 'z' sounds which occur in Arabic, Persian and Sindhi. The absence of the distinguishing marks is not likely to trouble scholars of Arabic and Persian who are familiar with the correct spelling. Readers, however, who are ignorant of the Arabic, Persian and Sindhi characters find in phonetic meticulousness merely a disturbance and annoyance which has no compensating advantages. Where Oriental words have become Anglicized into some generally accepted form I have used these forms. But otherwise I have followed a system which remains faithful to the original to the extent that aspirated and breathed sounds are indicated by the presence of the letter 'h'. Thus I have accepted words like 'Sind' and 'Sukkur' when on a principle of formal consistency I should have written 'Sindh' and 'Sakhar'. The transliteration of Sindhi words is difficult because every word in Sindhi ends in a vowel sound either pure or nasalized. Burton endeavoured, in some of his notes to his *History of Sindh*, to show these final short vowels. The result is not satisfactory and I have not followed his example. I have, therefore, omitted all the final short vowels where these occur. Another difficulty with Sindhi is the frequency of nasalized sounds which cannot be represented conveniently by any form of English transliteration. Scholars of language who are interested in this matter must go to the Sindhi alphabet for instruction. In the numerous quotations from old records and from writings of past generations which I have given I have almost always retained the spelling found in the originals, even though this spelling is more often than not erroneous. This explanation will make clear the apparent inconsistency with which the same words are spelt throughout this work.

APPENDIX VII

NOTE ON THE REFERENCES TO SIND IN THE BOMBAY GOVERNMENT RECORDS IN THE BOMBAY RECORD OFFICE

An examination of the press lists published shows an enormous gap in the references to the trade of the Company in Sind. The earliest reference traceable is one dated 8 December 1646 (the first year available) from the ship 'Hart' at Sind Road from John Spiller, Henry Gary and Gilbert Harrison. Letters from the same three persons and from Nicholas Scrivener are found addressed from Tahtah, Kandeārah till 1657, when the last letter is from Nicholas Scrivener regarding the Company's cargo of lead on 13 October 1657. From that date there is a complete blank till 25 November 1744, when there is a letter from Mr Symmons at Tattah to the Chief and Factors at Surat. Thereafter references to Sind become more numerous but are not common till 1758, when the Sind Factory was re-established. There is a regular record of the Sind Factory from August 1762 to July 1764, the letters being dated sometimes from Tatta and sometimes from Shāw Bunder. In a list of Company's Covenanted servants at Bombay and Factories subordinate there is no mention of any servant residing in Sind. There is mention of factories at Gombroon, Bussorah, Gulph of Persia and Cambay. This list is with a letter dated 28 August 1739 and covers the time of service of factors during the period 1712 to 1738.

In the Press List of Ancient Documents for 1646-1700 the following years are unrepresented 1648-55, 1658-9. The record for some of the years of the period is also very scanty. From 1701 to 1719 there is very little record for the following years 1705-7, and nothing at all for the years 1710 to 1718.

BOOK II
LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

' The very songs I frame
Are faithless to thy cause
And steal the honours of thy name
To build their own applause

Create my soul anew,
Else all my worship's vain
This wretched heart will ne er be true
Until 'tis formed again

Descend celestial fire,
And seize me from above
Melt me in flames of pure desire,
A sacrifice to love '

ISAAC WATTS

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INTRODUCTION

PRINCIPLES OF POETRY AND POETICAL CRITICISM

' POETRY ', like ' romance ' and ' religion ' and other general terms of the same nature, is a word of vast but undefined meaning Poetry in the sense of poetical composition is capable of examination from two utterly diverse points of view, the exoteric and the esoteric The former is concerned with form and expression as a mere technical achievement in the exposition of language The latter deals with poetry as a vehicle of thought and meaning It also takes within its scope the aesthetic or the pleasure-giving quality of poetry Now it is precisely because of the confusion prevalent in most works of literary criticism and aesthetics in respect of the two-sided character of this esoteric examination of poetry that it is necessary to guard against an extremely common fallacy This fallacy arises from a failure to distinguish between the content of a thought and the state of mind of the person thinking about it The point will be made clear by considering for a moment the parallel case of aesthetics, which is concerned with the meaning and value of beauty ' People ask,' says Mr Sturge Moore, ' why is this beautiful ? ' ' Authorities reply,' he continues, ' because all its parts are subordinated according to their degree of essential truth, as Coleridge taught, or because it resolves an emotional conflict, as Mr Richards now professes at Cambridge, or because it is intuitive, as Signor Croce has thundered from Italy But none of these ingenious dicta answer the wrong question " What is true about beauty ? " was not what we meant to ask, but " What makes beauty evident ? "—For beauty can alone be seen by admiration The intellect cannot see it ¹ Now is this sound ? It is not There is a complete confusion of thought running through the argument There is a failure to distinguish between the qualities that satisfy the canons by which a thing can be declared beautiful and the emotional content of the person aware of a beautiful thing A more adequate analysis would show that beauty cannot be apprehended unless there is in the act an intellectual judgement as well as a feeling of pleasure The judgement is certainly an activity of the reasoning mind whereas the experience of pleasure is a flowing of the emotions in a particular direction Nothing but muddled thinking can result from confusing the two together in a vague mental synthesis

¹ *Annals for Aphrodite*, p 153

Now the kind of attitude which has just been criticized in respect of beauty is very commonly employed in respect of poetry. In our appreciation of poetry there are usually both an intellectual judgement and an experience of pleasure. The problem before us is what enables us to decide that a certain composition of language is poetry and what differentiate good poetry from bad poetry? The answer is easier to reach if we remember that in the appreciation of poetry there are three separate elements. There is first an examination of external form, words, language, rhythm, subject matter and musical composition. There is second, an intellectual judgement as to the meaning and significance of the thought expressed in this external form. There is, third, an emotional attitude called up by the aesthetic effect of the poetry on the mind. The first is the exoteric point of view. The second and third together constitute the esoteric point of view. The first element can be isolated and made an external object capable of scientific analysis by certain fairly well recognized standards. The second is an exercise of the rational faculty. The third is purely a psychological activity. It is chiefly due to the vagaries of the aesthetic taste that so many divergent opinions are held on the merits of any particular poetical composition. It follows from this argument that in order to understand any piece of poetry fully we must be able to examine it as a material construction in language and rhythm, to grasp the ideas it seeks to convey, and to experience the pleasure which it is intended to communicate. According, therefore, as a piece of poetry satisfies these standards of good and skilful composition, of clearness, dignity and truth in its ideas, and of aesthetic excellence it is to be judged as good poetry. These are the three criteria of poetical value. Each belongs to a clearly distinguishable field of mental activity. Nothing but confused thinking will be found in any literary criticism which fails to recognize this fundamental fact.

The point merits further examination. Let me take an instance at random from modern literary criticism. 'It is evident', says Dr I. A. Richards in his *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 'that the bulk of poetry consists of statements which only the very foolish would think of attempting to verify. They are not the kind of things which can be verified. Poetry affords the clearest example of this subordination of reference to attitude. It is the supreme form of emotive language'.¹ Now, here a number of generalizations are made about poetry. Not only are the generalizations untrue but the manner in which they are expressed shows that the function of the intellect and the aesthetic activity which forms the equipment

¹ *Principles of Literary Criticism*, pp. 272-3

for the appreciation of poetry have been confused with each other. The statement that poetry is the supreme form of emotive language cannot be substantiated. There are many kinds of emotive language. Rhetoric and prayer are well-known kinds. Who shall decide which of the many forms of emotive language is supreme? At the best Dr Richards' statement is merely a doubtful opinion. But perhaps all that is meant is that poetry has a strong emotional appeal couched in beautifully expressed and skilfully arranged language. What can possibly be the meaning of the assertion that only the very foolish would think of verifying the kind of statements that poetry makes? As it stands the statement is palpably untrue. If all that is meant is that symbolism and imagery and the turns of language which poetry must employ cannot be understood in the plain everyday sense of the words used, it seems that two important points have been omitted from consideration. First, language is allusive as well as literal, and second, ideas are verifiable by reference to general probability and to a scheme of truth and reality. In any ultimate analysis the statements of science possess no greater validity than those of poetry. Thus, as Dr Richards would hardly deny this, his meaning would appear to be no more than that the statements of poetry are not quite in the same category as judgements like 'two and two are four' and 'grass is green'. Again by the assertion that in poetry reference is subordinated to attitude it seems to be implied that the emotional content produced by poetry affects the significance of the idea. Of course it does nothing of the sort. What it does affect is the listener's conception of the idea, a very different thing. If the assertion that emotional content affects the significance of the idea were accepted, it would be a clear example of the very fallacy we have been endeavouring to avoid, namely that of confusing the content of the thought with the state of mind of the person thinking about it.

There is nothing whatever mysterious or difficult about poetic meaning, however hard it may be to explain the exact significance of any words a poet may have written. In poetry the method of expression is definitely calculated by means of tricks allied to the tricks of music to play upon the emotions of the listener. But this has no relation to the emotional content called up by the words. This emotional content is to be judged not by any power, akin to a kind of hypnotic influence which it may exercise upon the listener but by its ability to create in the listener's mind a recognizable picture of reality in some of its many aspects by bringing into use the rational or thinking faculty in man. The mere fact that the method of expression in poetry employs statements or judgements which cannot in a literal or word-for-word sense be regarded as the

everyday expression of conceptual experience is not essentially or exclusively a problem of poetry at all. All human language is allusive as well as direct. From its very nature poetry is prone to employ generally that primary form of thinking, the association of ideas, which is the source of simile, metaphor, imagery and symbolism. But this form must necessarily be used in all thinking that goes beyond the barest type of assertion open to the meanest intelligence working within the narrow range of direct perception. Thus Blake asks:

'How do you know but every bird that cuts the airy way
Is an immense world of delight closed to your senses five?'

Here he is speaking a language that is being put to a subtler and more advanced use than that employed in learning the alphabet or in asserting that two and two make four. His words have an allusiveness which refers to a conceptual attitude built up indeed from the facts of primary perception but going far beyond them. He is not asserting that birds have this peculiar quality which he suggests they may possess, nor does he expect a scientist to verify by induction and experiment the truth of this statement. He is merely using language in a developed way to picture a point of view somehow or other related to reality and capable of being understood by the reason working through a deep emotional content. The form of poetry has no relation to its meaning or significance. Some of the most profound and most difficult poetry is expressed in the simplest of language. The distinction between form and matter in poetry is fundamental. All sound literary criticism must differentiate between the thought and the manner of its expression. Prose is not poetry, nor is jingling doggerel, nor is banal triviality expressed in skilfully contrived verses. But in all these cases the failure to reach the standard of poetry springs from utterly divergent sources which must not be confused together.

This warning is particularly true of mystical and metaphysical poetry where symbolism and hidden meanings are characteristic features and language takes on a quality of transcendence.

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF A CLASSIC

THE emergence of genius is an event which in the present state of human knowledge approaches the inexplicable. Heredity and environment are certainly an inadequate explanation. There is usually little in the immediate circumstances of his birth and his upbringing to account for the manner in which an exceptional man towers above his fellows. In Shāh Abdul Latīf's case the enquirer finds small help towards knowing how this outstanding poet came to the fulfilment of his genius. Shāh Abdul Latīf's life in fact would seem to prove the truth of the old adage 'poeta nascitur, non fit'. It is true that Shāh Abdul Latīf came of a well-known family of Sayids and that down the centuries Sayids in Sind have produced a number of men famous for their learning and their saintliness. The poet's great-great-grandfather was the Shāh Karīm whose name is still held in reverence in Lower Sind. Though some poetry is attributed to Shāh Karīm and a few of his verses are believed to be incorporated in the *Risālo* there has come down to us nothing of outstanding merit. Nor is there in Sindhi literature either before or after Shāh Abdul Latīf's time anything fit to be compared with the *Risālo*.¹

The East in general is a place where learning and the love of learning cannot be said to be widespread. The learned man is exceptional. If he lives amongst a simple, rustic and largely unlettered people, he obtains easily a reputation for wonderful achievement which the critical examination of a later age may find to be undeserved. Very little is known of the education of Shāh Abdul Latīf. One of his preceptors was a Nūr Muhammad Bhattī of whose scholastic ability we are singularly ignorant. 'We do not know', says Līlārām Watanmal, 'how long our poet studied with Nūr Mahomad or how much he learnt from him'.² We shall not, however, be far wrong in assuming that Shāh Abdul Latīf was familiar with the traditions of his own family and that he must have had some command over the kind of learning which a studious Sayid of his time could have acquired. Tradition says that the Korān, the Masnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī and the Sindhi verses of Shāh

¹ There is a big edition of the poetry of Sachal (Sarmast) by Aghā Ghulām Nabi Khān Sūfi

² *Shāh Latīf*, p. 11

Karīm were constantly in his hands. The general truth of this assertion need not be doubted. But though it may explain some of the characteristic literary and scholarly qualities of the *Risālo*, it does nothing to account for the poetic excellence of the verses. We are thus reduced to the simple fact that genius knows no limiting bounds. Shāh Abdul Latīf must by nature have possessed those qualities of observation, expression and sincerity of thought which enabled him to put his own ideas and the ideas of the common people amongst whom he lived into verses that can without exaggeration be said to have a claim to immortality.

In the days when these verses were composed Islām in Sind preserved the true native form of its characteristic power. That power had been contributed to by a succession of Muslim dynasties which for centuries had set their seal upon the land. The thinking of the common people was permeated by ideas which, much more than they do in present-day Sind, penetrated deeply the Muslim consciousness. Today that territorial dominion has been lost. With the break-up of the typical theocratic society much of the structure of its social polity has disappeared. Thus against the whole mental background of those days there stood out a quality which is vital no longer in quite the same way and with quite the same power. The Muslim India of the Middle Ages, of which eighteenth century Sind was a relic, was in some of its features very reminiscent of medieval Christian Europe. There was the same sort of moving about to fairs and on pilgrimages. The 'mullo' and the mosque corresponded to the priest and the church. The darwishes were a kind of wandering friars. The structure of society was perhaps in an external way more deeply religious than it is today. Economic conditions were simpler, even if economic comfort was harder to attain. Owing to the general fatalistic and uncritical attitude that the average man adopted when faced with the blows of ill-fortune or distress it is probable that hardship was borne more stoically than today. It may not, therefore, be true to say that the economic struggle did not then absorb so much of human spiritual energy as it does now, when people are readier to worry about the attainment of creature comfort and when they see that the possibility of reaching a higher standard of living is not so distant as it used to be. But society was certainly then more static and more graded into classes. Men, therefore, accepted the blows of fate with greater complacency because they had not realized the extent to which human effort can alter the conditions under which people live.

The Sind which was the soil from which the poetry of a Shāh Abdul Latīf could spring was more like the 'Merrie England' which prevailed in the days of the economic self-sufficiency of the village,

the small town and restricted local enterprise. It was a society of landholders, petty cultivators, herdsmen, craftsmen and traders, knowing little of the outside world except what could be seen of it at markets and fairs, in the gatherings of strangers at tombs on saints' days or in the company of fellow pilgrims. Islām has never had the established hierarchy of Christian medievalism. To that extent it had a greater sense of the democracy of man and the common people shared more in its widely-flung culture of religious idea and belief. Life was hard but it was not without its compensations in a common ability, through certain social customs, to find simple relaxations from the rigours of a penurious existence. In such a society the saintly man, the interpreter of the simple creed of the Korān, the 'mullo', the 'shaikh', the 'ākhund' and the 'ustād' exercised a kind of authority which departed when life became more complex and the economic struggle more absorbing of mental energies. Shāh Abdul Latīf was born at a time when a great transition was beginning. This transition continued throughout his lifetime. The supreme territorial authority of the Muslim dynasties was breaking up and the settled structure of a medieval society was wearing a little thin. The elements which went to the making of this structure were numerous. There was the acknowledgement of man's state as the result of God's disposal of the world. It was accepted that there shall be the rich man in his palace and the poor man at the gate. The holy man was still a kind of uncrowned king amongst an illiterate people. Nothing has ever quite taken the place of this structure. When in a multitude of ways individualism began to supplant authoritarianism, much of the contentment which accompanied a quiet resignation to things as they were disappeared. The world ceased to be 'merrie'. Human endeavour became more self-centred and men were more prone to demand 'rights'. The other-worldly days of the poet, sage, saint were beginning to be numbered.

In Shāh Abdul Latīf's lifetime we can trace fairly easily most of the signs that the old order was soon to pass away. The poet's own life displays the successive stages he went through from poet to sage, ending finally in sainthood. The important point, however, is that Shāh Abdul Latīf is the last of the great medieval poets. He sang for a people whose religious outlook, intelligible and respected today, has lost for ever that quality of homogeneity with its environment which is so characteristic of medievalism. It is extremely doubtful whether poetry like Shāh Abdul Latīf's can ever again be composed in Sind. The verses can of course be imitated and have been imitated. But we feel that such imitation, however skilful, can be nothing but a feeble copy of something that has lost the lively

meaning it once held. The statement may perhaps seem paradoxical since the poems of Shāh Abdul Latif still bind Sind with a powerful spell of love and admiration. But there is really no paradox. Modern delight in the poems is of a different genre entirely. It comes partly from the development of a literary taste that is quite modern. It springs partly from a sentimental regard for the fine things of the past characteristic of all people at certain stages of their cultural development. Though the ideas in the poems are still believed they are not believed in quite the same way or for quite the same reason. It is precisely because the simpler and more burning conviction of a previous age has gone that the probabilities are all against Sind's producing a second Shāh Abdul Latif.

To expect this to happen would be like expecting another Donne or another Milton to appear in present day England. The emphasis of literary conception has altered. Values have changed. People have fuller minds than they had in those simpler days. Donne and Milton are still admired and loved. But the ideas they preached do not strike the modern mind in the manner that appealed to seventeenth century England. These ideas can now be seen to be capable of examination from quite another angle. To change the metaphor, they are like some exquisite work of art which later ages see only through a camera obscura, real indeed but somehow invested with a penumbra of unreality. In the field of art when something has been done once supremely well, the achievement becomes static. It reaches a sort of finality and becomes not an object of emotion so much as a subject for introspection, which is a very different matter. The uniqueness of Shāh Abdul Latif's poetry must therefore be explained in some such way as this. Shāh Abdul Latif was the first great exponent of the imaginative use of the Sindhi language. His achievement took place in days when Sind was still medieval in outlook. His poetry has in consequence been stamped with a peculiar cachet of its own, one that can never be applied again. No one will ever produce again this particular kind of poetry amidst the same local environment and in the same halo-content of thought, belief and feeling.

The poverty of Sindhi literature before Shāh Abdul Latif was the result of the late emergence of the Sindhi vernacular as a vehicle of literary expression. While Islām was setting its authoritative seal upon the structure of thought in all Muslim India most of the inspiration came from the great Arabic and Persian tradition. The emperor Bābur was profoundly contemptuous of the merits of India. He has shown this by the caustic comments in his memoirs, 'the people of Hindustan have no good houses, no good flesh, no grapes, no muskmelons, no good fruits, no ice or cold water, no good food or

bread in their bazaars, no baths or colleges, no candles, no torches, not a candlestick' ¹

It was not surprising that Urdu was regarded till the late seventeenth century as a barbarous and uneducated tongue unfit for the gems of poetic inspiration. The Courts used the Persian language. Persian was the medium of literary expression. Learned men wrote in Arabic or Persian. Except in areas where Sanskritic languages had reached a scholarly standard, no one thought it worth while attempting to employ the language of the common people with superlative skill or to discover in the vernaculars their potentiality for linguistic felicities. But now all has changed. Persian in India has become a language of pedantry used for the writing of literary conceits and *jeux d'esprit*, and not for the spontaneous local expression of literary thoughts. Sindhi too, has now developed on modern lines. If great poetry is to be written in it hereafter it will be in a manner congenial to modern ideas of thought and expression. A present-day poet may imitate Shāh Abdul Latīf's turns of phrase, employ his imagery, and indulge in a wealth of Sūfī philosophy, but it will be modern poetry and in so far as it seeks merely to be a facsimile of what was better said in the eighteenth century it will fail to live. Every age evolves for itself its own methods of literary expression best suited to proclaim its living convictions and beliefs and nothing which merely apes the past will be more than an unsubstantial shade. Thus are we left with the strange uniqueness of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry, the only gem cast up from the sea of Sind's vernacular literature at a time when that was able to express with patent sincerity the convictions of a living medievalism.

Shāh Abdul Latīf is no mere imitator of Jalāluddīn Rūmī, of Jāmī, or Hāfiz or Al Bistāmī. He is actually expressing in his own language ideas that were the current thought of his time. The uselessness of mere imitation has been well brought out by Professor Browne. Talking of the later Persian poets in India he says 'These poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced what the late Professor Éthé has happily termed the "Indian summer" of Persian poetry, and they had of course a host of imitators and successors as long as Persian continued to be the polite language of India. These last who were at best skilful manipulators of a foreign idiom I do not propose to notice' ². Browne is here speaking of the Indian poets who wrote in Persian, imitating the language and form of Sanāi, Attār, Mahmūd Shabistārī, Jāmī and others. There is little in their work that cannot be recognized for what it is, namely the slavish copying of ideas better expressed

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 333

² *Persian Literature in Modern Times* p. 165

by others, the manufacture of verses from which the light of life has departed. Shāh Abdul Latif stands in a different category. He is a poet using for the first time with supreme skill the language of the country folk and employing it to interpret ideas of beauty and of religious philosophy, which while drawing much inspiration from Persian models, succeeded in maintaining a high level of native originality and local eloquence. He was a man steeped in an understanding of the mystical teaching of Islām and familiar with the form of thought found to perfection in the great Persian masters. But this method of expression and his use of these ideas are quite individual and sincere because they actually responded to a true impulse to interpret the deepest ideas of the common folk amongst whom he spent the whole of his life. If it is the function of a poet not merely to express felicitously the ideas of his time but also to use his own language musically in order to bring out great truths, then Shāh Abdul Latif has established his claim to be an original poet of his own right and not a soulless copyist of ideas better expressed by others before him.

The tyranny which Persian models have exercised over Indian poetry in general is bad. It has confirmed the poets of India in their common failing—a failing not confined to Indian poetry alone—to imitate rather than to initiate. The fault is due in some measure to inherent complacency strengthened by the conservatism of Oriental poetry, which tends to limit its interests to certain topics only, and worse still, to employ the same imagery and the same symbolism as have been used with success by the masters of another idiom. Shāh Abdul Latif cannot be called conspicuous for any great originality of thought. But he expresses supremely well a species of religious philosophy current amongst the better educated men of his time.

Of what did this better education consist in seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind? There is not much direct evidence of contemporary character which can be called reliable. Mirza Kalich Bēg has, in his 'Old Sind', given some account of the learned men of Tatta during the period of its greatest splendour¹. The learned men of Moghul and Kalhōro Sind do not make a company imposing in achievement, though their number is not small. Their learned works were concerned mostly with religious disquisition, with the duties of the true Muslim, with annals, chronicles and histories as then understood and with verse on the Persian model. But these authors, some of whom were erudite and highly cultivated people, wrote in Persian and Arabic and not in the language of the countryside. This was the result partly of the tyranny of a

¹ op cit, pp 173 sqq

conservative literary tradition and partly of Islām's insistence on the superiority of the languages of Islām's historical progress. Some mention has been made in the first volume of the present work of the native historians, their merits and their defects. In a land where the Muslim theocratic theory prevailed so strongly it was inevitable that religion and education should go hand in hand. Thus most of the learned men of Old Sind were Sayids, Kāzīs, Mullas or persons concerned with the teaching of the Korān and the exposition of the Muslim faith in one way or another. If they were not themselves actively engaged in this form of activity they had certainly gained all the learning they possessed at the 'maktabas' and 'madressas' presided over by 'mullas', 'ākhunds' and 'ustāds'. The Memons, a class of Muslims hailing originally from Cutch, were remarkable for their interest in learned things. They have produced, says Burton,¹ 'many very learned men and done much to introduce the religious sciences into this country'.

Mirza Kalich Bēg gives long lists of famous names associated with light and learning in Tatta during its days of glory. It will suffice for our present purpose merely to mention some of them. The standard of their learning and the quality of their scholarship are now difficult to determine because they have left few relics of their work. At least, if such relics do still exist, they must be buried in manuscripts which are in the hands of private persons and which have not been published for the benefit of succeeding generations. Of famous Kāzīs at Tatta, Mirza Kalich Bēg cites Kāzī Nāmat Ullāh, Kāzī Hamad, Kāzī Abīqullāh, Kāzī Shakīkh Muhammad. Other names are Shaikh Sadaruldīn, Makhdūm Rukhanaldīn, Makhdūm Miran walad Moulāna Yākūb, Makhdūm Fazalullāh, Makhdūm Ferōz, Makhdūm Usmān walad Makhdūm Bahāwaldīn, Mūlla Muhammad Damāghī, Makhdūm Abdul Jamīl, Makhdūm Faizullāh, Makhdūm Hamzo Wāiz, Moulāna Muhammad Tāhīr, Makhdūm Mahmūd, Makhdūm Ādam mīan Abul Hasan, Makhdūm Rahamatullāh and many others. Of poets and writers there is also a formidable list containing the names of Muhammad Mukīm, Mulla Abdul Rashīd, Abdul Kayūm, Mulla Mohabat Alī, Mulla Salāmī, Mulla Abdul Hakīm, Mulla Yār Muhammad Khadam, Mulla Razā Hāshmi, Mirza Ghulām Alī Mōmin, Asadullāh Tabāh and others. Poetry, astronomy, medicine, philology, dialectics, and similar learned subjects were the topics of discourse. The chief centres of learning were Tatta, Matīārī and Rōhrī, places famous for the residence of Sayids and holy men attached to tombs, mosques and shrines. It was characteristic of much of the learning of those days that the writers belonged largely to families that had immigrated into Sind. They were not Sindhis

¹ *History of Sindh*, p. 248

by birth. During the days of the Afghāns who preceded the Moghuls, and even earlier, Sind proved a favourite home for learned men of this type which has always appealed to Islām. Both the Afghāns and the Moghuls showed a tendency to encourage the settlement of men of this character who were further attracted by the reputation which Sind had gained for its Sūfī philosophy and its Sūfī exposition of Muslim doctrine. The age of the Afghāns and Tarkhāns was specially notable for the entrance of this kind of intellectual aristocracy who spoke and wrote, however, a language that was intelligible only to the learned intelligentsia. It could have had but little effect upon the unlettered cultivator class who knew of Arabic little beyond what they learned at the mosque for their religious devotions and who used neither Arabic nor Persian in their daily speech. In this respect Sind was merely typical of Muslim India generally. 'The foreign immigrants,' says Arnold,¹ 'and their descendants, Arabs, Persians, Turks, Mughals and Pathāns formed an important element in the total Muhammadan population and exercised a preponderating influence in the administration, the social organization and the religious life. The missionaries to whose proselytizing efforts the conversion of whole tribes is attributed and the saints whose tombs are still venerated throughout all parts of Muslim India were for the most part of foreign extraction. The effect of this constant stream of foreign immigration has been to keep India in close contact with the main currents of theological belief and speculation in Islām.'

Sind has always had a number of persons called 'hāfiz' who know the Korān by heart. But this does not mean that they have any scholarly knowledge of the Arabic language. Burton has very sarcastic remarks to make on the standard of Persian and Arabic knowledge displayed in Sind by persons who professed to be familiar with these languages. The ancestors of Abul Fazul, the statistician of the Āin-i-Akbarī were typical instances of the immigration of learned men from the highlands of Central Asia when the intellectual standard of Islām was high and the pursuit of learning was accounted a matter of great worth. Shaikh Mūsa, Abul Fazul's great-great-grandfather settled at Rēl, a pleasant village of Sewistān, and married into a family of God-fearing and pious people, and he did not exchange his retired habits for the occupations of the world. 'His son and grand-children,' says Abul Fazul, 'following his example lived happily and were instructed in the esoteric and exoteric doctrines of philosophy. In the beginning of the tenth century (i.e. Muhammadan) Shaikh Khizr set out impelled with the

¹ 'Islām in India' in *Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V pp. 895-7

desire of visiting the saints of India '1 Among the holy men he visited was Shaikh Yūsuf Sindhī 'who had traversed the fields of secular and mystic lore and had acquired many perfections of the religious life '2

These illustrations bring out clearly some characteristic features of learning and education in Sind Both learning and education were part of the great impulse of Islām and they were largely kept alive from outside The system of education followed the general type found in Muslim countries Education centred round the mosque to which the 'maktab' was attached There were 'madressas' for higher study of a mediæval scholastic nature There flourished a well-established school of Sūfī thought which long continued to attract that studious religious type of mind so often found amongst Muslims who have the time and the means to penetrate into the arcana of their faith We have no contemporary account of the working of this educational system in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Sind The best description of it has been given by Burton who, in his own meticulous fashion, elicited the facts orally from learned men of the last century still retaining personal memories of what had been handed down to them or told them by their elders in an age when oral tradition had a much greater force than it possesses today This education was then exactly the education prevalent generally throughout the countries of Islām

It is certain that in its heyday Tatta was a great centre of erudition and learning But it is impossible to believe Hamilton when he says that the Tatta of his time (circa A D 1699) contained four hundred colleges and schools It is true that Hamilton may be referring not to Tatta alone but to Sind generally when he says, 'The city of Tatta is famous for learning in theology, philology and politics and they have above four hundred colleges for training up youth in these parts of learning I was very intimate with a Sayid who was a professor of theology and was reckoned a great historian He asked me one day if I had heard of Alexander the Great in my country' Hamilton³ wrote up his fascinating memoirs long after he had retired from adventurous living His account of Sind must have been compiled at least twenty years after 1699 As his writings are usually fully circumstantial and detailed we are justified in assuming that he must have maintained diaries and records of what he saw But it is beyond the bounds of credibility that a place the size of Tatta could have been provided with so many centres of instruction

¹ Ātn, III, pp 418-9

² *ibid*, p 419

³ Hamilton *op cit*, in Pinkerton Hamilton appears to have died about 1732 and is believed to have written his memoirs about the second decade of the eighteenth century

Even one hundred schools would have been excessive. The only inference that can reasonably be drawn from Hamilton's account is that Iktādāda a large number of madrasas and seminaries frequented by students and presided over by men learned in Islāmic teaching.

Law's well-known work on the 'Promotion of Learning during Muhammadan Rule' is of very little assistance in respect of Sind during Moghul days. Nor would it be wise to accept Law's wide generalizations about the enlightened educational policy of the Delhi Emperors. The evidence in fact does no more than show that as a general rule the Moghul Emperors were not insensible to the promotion of education and learning and that they and their nobles occasionally, and fitfully, helped to found certain important institutions and libraries. When Aurangzīb decreed that in Gujārāt every year teachers should be appointed at the cost of the public exchequer and stipends be paid according to the recommendation of the Sadar and the *tasdiq* of the teacher, the grant made was small and only three moulvis were appointed, one at Ahmedābād, one at Pātan and one at Surat and only forty-five students were given subsistence allowance (*Mirāt-i Ahmadi* 272). The Moghul Empire indeed was framed for quite another purpose than the propagation of learning. It is beyond all dispute that the proportion of the state revenues actively devoted to education through the Department of Alms, administered by the Imperial Almoner, the *Sadr-us-Sadūr*, was very small indeed. Poets and learned men were encouraged at the court. But that is not to say that there was any recognized educational policy. Many of these poets were no more than courtly flatterers engaged in extolling the virtues of the prince in the usual Oriental style of hyperbole. The chief manner in which education was encouraged was by the bestowal in *wakf* of *ināms*, *jāghirs* and grants to mosques and religious foundations. But many of these exhibitions of favour were the result of the religiosity of local rulers and not of the enlightenment of the Delhi throne. Law says pertinently 'While speaking of the schools and colleges of those days we should not lose sight of the educational work done by distinguished learned men teaching pupils in their houses. They supplemented the educational work done by the literary institutions and provided a field for post-collegiate studies'.¹ There is certainly no evidence that I have seen that would warrant the belief that a single educational institution in Sind owed its origin to any act of an Emperor of Delhi.

Jahāngīr promulgated an ordinance that whenever a well-to-do man or a rich traveller died without any heir his property would escheat to the Crown and be utilized for building

¹ *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule* p. 164

and repairing 'madressas', monasteries, etcetera. But we know of no instance in which Sind benefited from these orders. The Moghuls themselves were fond of learning and books. Some of the Delhi Emperors were widely read and intelligent men, but it is more than doubtful whether they ever carried out consistently any comprehensive educational scheme amongst the subjects of their dominions. Indeed one of the sayings of Akbar recorded in the *Āin* is definitely retrograde: 'The prophets were all illiterate. Believers should therefore retain one of their sons in that condition.'¹ We shall, therefore, not be wrong in concluding that Sind in Moghul days showed merely the operation of the Islāmic educational system and was helped in no way except that in which education is encouraged by Islāmic teaching. The chief support of the literary groups came from revenues granted in the form of *ināms* to mosques and to 'maktabas' attached to mosques. Learning in any real sense was confined to small coteries of studious men whose chief stimulus towards self-improvement came from the religious doctrines in which they believed with high sincerity. The great mass of the people remained illiterate. Beyond the smattering of Arabic required for their religious devotions the common people had little acquaintance with the written word. But in an age when learning is rare the scholar attains a sort of sanctity which attaches to him a small band of admirers. It is mostly from these small nerve centres of thought that learning was transmitted in an imperfect way to the population at large.

Enough has been said to show that education and learning in Sind followed the usual Muslim practice. This practice can be studied better in the accounts of those centres of Islāmic learning like Cairo, Baghdād, Cordova, Samarkand or Bukhāra of which descriptions are available. Primary and secondary courses of study both prevailed. The course of higher studies under the Muslim system shows many resemblances to the trivium and quadrivium of medieval scholasticism in Europe. This medieval system regarded learning more as a means to purely intellectual exercise or debating dexterity than as a commentary on the actual life of the day. Primary education was very hidebound. When the child began to speak he was taught the Muslim articles of faith, the words from the Korān 'Exalted is Allāh, the King in truth, there is no God but He, the Lord of the stately throne of Heaven' (الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ), the throne verse (*ayāt-al-kursī*) 11:256 and the last two verses of *sūra* 114 (*surat-al-hasr*). At seven began the systematic study of the Korān combined with instruction in important religious precepts and usages, the correct responses of the *azān*, the different kinds of washings and the prayers in the mosque and the procedure of joint prayer.

¹ Sayings of Akbar in *Āin*, III

This was accompanied by the writing on tablets or boards (*talhī*) and exercises in reading and writing in the Arabic script. Legends of the prophet and stories of holy men formed part of the regular course. Poetry was also studied but all criticism in poetry was strictly excluded. Burton has much to say on the system he found prevailing in Sind. He mentions the importance attached to calligraphy and the five qualities which a good reed pen must possess: it must be *sahī* (fine), *ṣim* (straight), *dhira* (well pierced), *sarkha* (red) and *supul* (well grown).¹

Secondary or higher education also followed a well defined course of study at 'madressas'. We do not know, however, if more than a few students carried their education so far in Mo, hul, Kalhōra and Tālpūr times. Burton has described fully the course of study. He learnt this by personal enquiry from one who had himself gone through the course. Students acquainted with the medieval university system will recognize the similarity of the course of study to that pursued in typical middle age universities in Europe. In the primary course the student had already learnt the simple form of the Arabic conjugations. The works studied were the *Mizān-i-sarf* by Lāl Shāhbāz, the famous scholar and saint of Sehwan. Then followed study of the *Ajnās* or *Munshaib* rules for the formation of the increased derivatives, and the *Kisim-i-dovyūm* for the irregular verbs. Both these works were by Lāl Shāhbāz but were written in Persian. The next book to be read was the *Akd*, also by Lāl Shāhbāz, in Arabic and Persian mixed, dealing with the permutation of letters. After them came the *Zubdat*. Much of this part of the course was committed to memory either as it stood or by means of rhyming mnemonics. After this grounding in the dry structure of language the pupil next proceeded to *Nahw* (declension of the noun and pronoun) and went into the deeper study of *Sarf*, reading either the work of Mīr Sayyid Alī Sharif or the *Sarf-i-Zarradī* composed in Persian and Arabic by the poet Jāmi. *Nahw* was then continued in more difficult works like the *Nahw-i-zararī* of Abul Hasan Alī, and then advanced to the study of logic (*mantiq*), where the chief works to be read were the *Isagūjī* (*Isagōgē* of Porphyry) translated into Arabic by Asīr al dīn Abbāsī, the *Kalakūlī*, a commentary on the above, the *Shamsiyā*, a book on dialectics by the poet Hāfiz, and various commentaries. From logic and elementary dialectics the advanced student proceeded to higher dialectics and had then to study the authoritative works of the Hanafī theology, like the *Hidāyat*, the *Wilāyat* and similar books, and peruse some commentary on the *Korān* and the *Ilm-i-hadīs*. Burton says that very few students advanced as far as to study rhetoric and those who did seldom

¹ Burton *History of Sindh*, p. 396

proceeded beyond the text book called *Talkhīs* and its commentaries the *Mukhtasar* and *Mutawwal*. The highest branches of study were the pronunciation, reading and chanting of the *Korān*, dialectic, prosody, medicine, the occult sciences of geomancy, astrology and divination by numbers, and philosophy. At all stages of this course a great strain was placed upon the memory and pupils were expected to learn long passages by heart. There does not seem to have been much inspiration or intelligence about the teaching and the hide-bound nature of the course of study must have smothered originality, and indeed everything except subtlety in argument and adroitness in dialectic on topics that bore very little practical relation to the everyday life of the people. Learning was thus a kind of self-centred knowledge of limited scope, a closed science with fixed rules, the unfortunate student having for years to overtax his memory and devote his mental energies to such subjects as grammar, formal syntax, formal logic, dialectical argument and similar dry bones of study.

This peculiarity of Muslim learning in the special conditions of Sind accounts fully for the reverence with which men learned in this lore were held by the uneducated populace, who could not possibly have understood the jejune formal ideas which occupied the minds of these erudite but narrowly-confined intelligences. While intellectualism in Islām has had its renaissance, it has never had a romantic revival, which in fact it would have resisted. The result has been to maintain till a very late day a purely scholastic attitude towards knowledge of God, life and human activity. In Sind, which has never been distinguished for learning and could have had few chances in medieval times of maintaining anything like a Muslim university, the effect of this starved intellectualism was to atrophy much of what was learnt by only a few persons after prodigious feats of memory and concentration. Nor have we any reason to think that the products of the learned men of Sind challenged comparison with what was achieved in other and more enlightened parts of the Muslim world. It is quite certain that Shāh Abdul Latīf was not a learned man in the narrow scholastic sense. Nor should we be justified in assuming that he had more than a smattering of the higher education of his day. The works of Hāfiz, Jalāluddīn Rūmī and Jāmī were, however, known in some fashion to the leading ākhunds of his time. Shāh Abdul Latīf with his deep sense of poetry and his understanding of some of the more personal aspects of the Muslim conception of God and mankind's relation to Him, must have picked up enough Arabic and Persian to be able to realize better than his teachers the spirit of the Muslim theosophy preached by the great writers of Persia. In this he was typical of the best

thought of his own and preceding generation. In Sind this took the form of a simple-minded conviction of the tenets of a tolerant Sūfism. From this have flowed certain important consequences, namely the establishment of a Sūfī creed of thought, a more pantheistic conception of Eternity, deities than prevailed elsewhere, an absence of bitterness between Sūfī and Shīʿī, and a bond of rapprochement between the deeper mystical ideas of Muslim and Hindu thought. The latter especially helps to explain the extraordinary fact that the typical Eternity mysticism of the Rīzī is understood and loved in Sind by Hindu as much as by Muslims.

It does not appear that the teaching profession has ever been held in any great respect in Sind. Burton comments on the practice of giving perquisites to teachers to supplement their meagre earnings. The ʿĀkhund refused to start anything new without a fee. At the three great Ids of Bāʾr, Litr and Barʾit the teacher used to write two or three couplets upon crudely ornamented paper. For this he received from four annas to a rupee in payment. These compositions were called 'idīs' and were hung upon the walls of the house. Teachers were seldom paid more than half a rupee by each pupil per month. In the time of the Tālpūrs Sind possessed six 'madressas', at Sehwan, Tripptat near Sehwan, Khōhra north of Sehwan, Matīārī, Mōhar or Walhārī near Umarʾūt and Chothīārī on the Nāra river. In his account of the Town and Port of Karāchi in 1840, Captain Hart states: Each scholar takes a handful of rice and a few sticks with him as a present to the master daily and a rupee or two is paid monthly by the parents. The Persian language is taught by the Mullas of whom ten or twelve have classes which generally assemble in the mosques. The children of those who intend them for employment in the service of the government are there instructed, the charge varying from a tunga to Rs. 3 or 4 monthly, according to the progress made by the pupil, and on the completion of the child's education it is usual for the master to receive a present.

Muhammadan females are taught to read the Korān.¹ Burton states, however, that a boy was nine years old before he began the systematic study of his own language in Sindhi. When he did the course of study was (1) the Nūr Nāmo of Abdul Hāshim, an easy religious treatise on the history of things in general before the creation of man, (2) the works of Makhdūm Hāshim beginning with the Tasfir, (3) tales in prose and verse, such as the adventures of Saiful or Lail-i-Majanō, the adventures and sayings of celebrated saints of the golden age of Islām and books on the life and death of the Prophet. It is unlikely that conditions

¹ Government of Bombay Records Selections New Series, XVII Part I, p. 216

were any better in the ruder and rougher days of the Moghuls and Kalhōra The Sindhi language was much neglected as a medium of instruction except by Hindus, who used a non-Arabic script The whole system was dull and deadening It emphasized the exercise of the memory at the expense of the intelligence, a defect of vernacular teaching that has not yet been cured anywhere in India These facts about education and learning in Sind make still more remarkable the creation in the eighteenth century of the great Sindhi classic of Shāh Abdul Latif They prove indeed the truth of the saying that the poet is born and not made

If the poems of the Rīsālo have their origin partly in the expression of Muslim thought, they have another source in music and singing The poems are due to the lyrical impulse They were originally composed to be recited, intoned or sung to a musical accompaniment This close connexion with music they still retain Europeans have found much difficulty in understanding the music of India because it presents features which, superficially at any rate, differentiate it strikingly from the familiar music of western Europe In addition Indian music has a religious and mythological background utterly out of keeping with the scientific structure of western music Indian music is only now ceasing to partake of the character of a black art known to initiates alone and is still devoid of any kind of universal system of script notation All these features of Indian music put it into a category which Europeans find difficult to appreciate, since music in the West has long since been emancipated from such trammels and has been reduced to the form of science, which anyone can learn if he has the skill and powers of application

The difference between eastern and western music is, however, only a surface difference The principles of music are the same everywhere Research in Indian music has revealed its essentially primitive character But this primitiveness in structure and content has not been dissociated from an amazing elaboration of detail after the Oriental fashion Indian music is on much the same footing as the Sanskrit language, which is a primitive vehicle of expression overlaid by an enormous quantity of elaboration and complicated by artificial grammatical rules The real truth is that Indian music is simpler than European music because it has become completely conventionalized on certain early and primitive lines which were deserted by European musicians centuries ago These primitive lines have, however, been elaborated with a complexity of detail exactly similar to the intricacy of ornament found in the carvings of Hindu temples, or in the involved tracery of script writing used for decorative purposes Music in India has in fact fallen under the same general influence as complicated the grammar

and syntax of Sanskrit and the principles of Indian philosophy. These influences tended to make music a closed field of semi-secret lore within which generations of ingenious and subtle minds have thought out a vast variety of permutations and combinations of a few simple originals. Thus while Europe in music has shed itself of all modes except the major and minor scale, with a few straggling relics of earlier modes hardly used except in brief moments of expression, Indian music has continued to employ a large number of modes and has also retained and developed a system of musical intervals which make little appeal to the European ear. European music has concentrated on exploring the major and minor scales and has generally enhanced their significance by the systematic development of harmony, counterpoint and the application to musical instruments of the potentialities of the four basic kinds of human voice—the bass, the baritone, the tenor or alto and the soprano. Thus while rhythm and melody remain common to both Indian and European music, there is a vast divergence in the field of harmony, the chief glory of European music, which, though present, is still in a very rudimentary form in Indian music, and in the treatment of musical intervals. It is characteristic of musical modes that they employ different runs of notes for the expression of melody. As Indian music has many more modes than European music and as it has also been extremely conservative about the manner of employing these runs of notes, Indian music has a greater range of melodic possibility but has utterly failed to develop that richness which European music has lavished on its treatment of the two modes which, alone of all those it once possessed, it has deliberately retained. Indian music has furthermore suffered greatly from its remaining a closed system in the control of professional performers and musicians who have kept the practice of it by traditional methods in their own hands. As a result of the failure to develop harmony, musical instruments in India are generally of a very simple type, quite incapable of producing the effects of such developed and intricate instruments as the organ, the piano, and the variety of instruments which when played together make possible orchestration on a grand scale.

These defects of Indian music are being gradually realized in India today. A strong movement has arisen to rescue music from the hands of the professional musician or minstrel class who have hitherto preserved it as an almost magical field of their own, to introduce general scales of notation which will enable anyone to write down melodies and perform them for himself, and to explore the possibility of extending harmony in Indian music. But there is no unanimity of view in these matters. Thus while the

professional minstrel, who is usually a person of poor education and is often indeed illiterate possessing merely a certain dexterity in performing on his simple instrument, has lost a great deal of the respect in which he used to be held, a general knowledge of music is still hindered by the absence of a common written notation. The taste of the public is moreover becoming debased by the adoption of the handblown harmonium tuned to the European major and minor scales, and also by the excruciating cacophonies of incompetent brass bands playing garbled versions of European tunes. These bands are employed to give an impression of opulent up-to-dateness at weddings and similar ceremonies once graced by the performance of genuine Indian music by proficient exponents of the minstrel class.

In the days of the Shāh jō Rīsālo this demoralization of musical taste had not set in. It was still possible to write poetry with the assurance that it would be accompanied musically in the manner intended by the poet. The minstrel was still a person commanding respect, despite his low social position. The disreputable character of the minstrel's private life was often responsible for his low social standing, for he commonly associated with persons who indulged in opium, bhang and other intoxicants capable of producing a kind of frenzied exuberance and his womenfolk were engaged in the unedifying occupations of prostitution and nautch dancing. So uncritical was the public of those days that the mere dexterity of the performer and his capacity to produce on his sitār, sarangī or bīna melodies, which only a member of his class could so perform, was sufficient to create in the minds of the listeners a belief that this music was a kind of mysterious and almost superhuman art closed to the bulk of mankind. For this naïve and childlike attitude of thought the vague sentimental mythology which linked music with religion as one of the mysteries of grace and light was largely responsible. Music in fact was still a form of mumbo-jumbo. This primitive appraisal has appeared at all early stages and had not died out entirely in Europe in the middle ages. Shakespeare makes effective use of it in 'The Merchant of Venice'.

'There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest
But in his motion like an angel sings
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims
Such harmony is in immortal souls
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it'

The Sur Sōrath in the Rīsālo is based on the same idea of the mystery and magic, the holy force, of music. The poem is interesting not only because it depicts the great power of the musician, 'the man

of music', who by playing on his string can induce the King to yield up his head in willing sacrifice in sheer mystical abandonment, but also because it makes clear the relation believed to exist between music and immortal things. 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music', says Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*, emphasizing the power of music to bring the mind to thinking of the deeper things that move the spirit of man. This attitude is typical of the musical influence that runs through the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf. Without an understanding of it the full force of the poetry cannot be apprehended. This message is not yet lost in the East where music despite its modern debasement is still in popular esteem, regarded in some way as the handmaid of religion.

The poems of the Risalo are arranged according to their musical settings though not all of them are named after the tunes to which they are sung. To understand this system of nomenclature we must consider for a moment some of the characteristics of Oriental music in India. While the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf is typically Muslim in sentiment and expression, the musical foundation owes little to Islām. The *Amr-i-Akbari* describes the music of Sind as *kāmi* (amatory). It also gives an account of the *rāgs* and *rāginīs* prevalent in India. The *rāgs* and *rāginīs* constitute a form of Hindustānī music pure and simple. There is nothing essentially Muslim in them. The Arabic chant song, the important influence in Muhammadan music, is quite different. This depends on rhythm rather than in melody and was built up on the natural quantities of the syllables in the Arabic language. This chanting is heard in the intoning of the *Kor'ān* in the mosques. The song music was different but that too depended upon correct rhythm and the beating of time upon the hand drum. Monotony is therefore a characteristic of Muslim music. Ghazzālī divides Arabic songs into religious pilgrim songs, war songs, songs of joy, love songs, and songs expressive of religious ecstasy. The religious significance of music is much stressed by this great Arabic writer. And I say that to God Most High belongs a secret consisting in the relationship of measured airs to the souls of man so that the airs work upon them with a wonderful working. The seventh kind of listening is the listening of him who loves God and has a passion for Him and longs to meet Him so that he cannot look upon a thing but he sees it in Him (whose perfection is extolled) and no sound strikes upon his ear but he hears it from Him and in Him.¹ Here Ghazzālī is speaking more of the metaphysic of music than of its structure. Indeed he connects the listening to music with *wajd*, or the rapture and ecstasy of the

¹ *Emotional Religion in Islam as affected by Music and Singing*. Translated by D. B. Macdonald. *J R A S* 1901 p. 229.

Sūfis In a puritanical strain blasphemous and obscene poetry is barred and so are the poems extolling the beauty of any particular woman Nor must music be listened to if it stirs up thoughts contrary to the teaching of the Korān While it would not be right to hold that influences of this nature are absent from the musical attitude of Shāh Abdul Latīf, it would be more correct to say that the Sindhī poet, in using the musical accompaniment to emphasize the meaning of his verse, employed the musical forms of India, which were the most suitable vehicles for his purpose because they were indigenous and understood by all classes of the populace

There is no distinctively Sindhī school of music The music of Sind is part of the musical heritage of Hindustān The broad facts about Indian music have been made clear by Clements in his masterly 'Introduction to the Study of Indian music' Indian music belongs to two great groups, the Hindustānī prevalent in the north and west of India and in the Deccan, and the Karnatic prevalent in the south and east 'Many scales', says Clements, 'are common to both and the general aspect of the two systems is apparent from the scales which are first taught to beginners In the west the scale is the same as the just major scale of Europe In the south it is a chromatic scale In Hindustānī music it is called the Rāga Bhairava, with semitones between the first and second, third and fourth, fifth and sixth, and seventh and eighth degrees'

The Hindu theory of music serves the present-day forms of melody types (rāgas) through (1) grāmmas, (2) murchanas, scales of seven notes for the string called the murchana of the note chosen, (3) jātis which introduced a drone accompaniment, fixed final notes, vādīs and semivādīs, and (4) grāmma rāgas Into the technicalities of this process of development it is unnecessary to enter here Indeed to do so would be irrelevant to the present purpose The point of the matter is that the rāgas developed in this manner from the melodic schemes into which all the tunes of Hindustān's music fall The classification of these melodic schemes follows a highly fanciful system which has been described by many authors but by none so clearly as the famous early Orientalist, Sir William Jones 'The different position of the two semitones in the scale of seven notes gives birth to seven primary modes, and as the whole series consists of twelve semitones, every one of which may be made a modal note or tonic, there are in nature (though not universally in practice) twenty-seven other modes which may be called derivative The Hindu arrangement is elegantly formed on the variation of the Indian year and the association of ideas, a powerful auxiliary to the ordinary effect of modulation The modes in this system are

¹ Clements' *Introduction to the Study of Indian Music*, p. 2

deified and as there are six seasons in India, namely two springs, summer, autumn and two winters, an original R̥ār or God of the Mode, is conceived to preside over a particular season. Each principal mode is attended by five R̥ātrīs or Nymph of Harmony. Each has eight sons or Genu of the same divine art and each r̥ār with his family is appropriated to a distinct season in which alone his melody can be sung or played at prescribed hours of the day or night.¹ There is thus a great deal of artificiality and mythological make-believe hampering the artistic development of the art of music in India, confining it to conventional channels and limiting particular melodic forms to particular time and particular purposes only. Musicians in consequence are restricted to certain definite notes only, namely those permitted in the modal form, in the expression of any melodic idea. Furthermore, since the melodic forms have become deified and are represented in religious art in stereotyped ways as gods and goddesses with special powers, the whole system has tended to be identified with religion and the practice of the art has been confined in the typical Hindu manner to castes of performers. The poems of the Risālo are all set to melodic forms of this rigid character. Most of the musicians in Sind have been Hindus and not Mussulmāns. Possibly in this circumstance may be found another reason why the Islāmic poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf exercises so strong a spell over the non-Muslim inhabitants of the land. While the thought may be Islāmic, the musical forms in which the poems are sung are part of the Hindu heritage of India.

The poems of the Risālo are set to rāgs and rāginīs of the generic types described. These types have of course many local variations. Many of the modal rāginīs to which some of the surs are sung are Sindhi variants of Hindustānī generic forms. In his commentary on Shāh Abdul Latīf, Mirza Kalich Bēg has classified the rāgs and rāginīs according to the system of Indian music. He finds six forms of rāg, namely Bharava, Malakūs, Sri, Mēgh, Hindōl and Dīpak with their accompanying rāginīs, 'sons' and 'associated relatives', extending to a very considerable number. Those who are interested in this topic may be referred to the writings of Mirza Kalich Bēg.² The subject is a technical one and has no relevance to the poetic worth of the Risālo itself. I have mentioned it here merely with the object of showing how important the musical influence was in the formation of the poems. Of the twenty-seven separate poems in the Muntakhab all but a few are named after the musical modes directly traceable to the musical system of India. The few exceptions to this general rule are poems like Suhinī, Sasuī Ābrī, Mōmul

¹ *Works*, Vol. XIII pp. 312-14

² *Shāh Abdul Latīf Bhitāī*, pp. 175 sqq

Rāno, Līlan Chanēsar and Khāhōrī which are named after the subject matter. But even in these cases the musical accompaniment will be found to fall into some melodic form suitable to the type of subject matter, the time of the year or the time of day when the song should be sung.

There is nothing distinctive in the music of Sindh. The instruments employed are chiefly the *ektār*, the *sītār*, the *sarangī*, the *tambūr*, and the various kinds of pipes and drums employed elsewhere in India. The *bīna*, or *vīna*, is hardly ever seen. The professional musicians are drawn mostly from the minstrel class, which is held in low esteem. There are many capable amateur performers. Doubtless there have always been such, because Sindh has long had a reputation for proficiency in musical execution prevailing amongst all classes. Burton has remarked of the poetry of the countryside that 'it is much more various and valuable than the prose and yields not in importance either to the Marāṭhī or the original compositions in the Hindī and Braj dialect. Its poetry is not without its charm. To a great variety of expression it unites terseness of idiom with much freshness and some originality of idea and language. The favourite figure is alliteration and this combined with omission of the casual affixes and of other such prosaic appendages gives a very distinct and peculiar rhythm.'¹ The people are very fond of music and singing to which the natural rhythm of the language offers much aid. Of the peculiar native form of poetical and musical composition Burton cites the '*fateh-nāmo*' or song of battle composed by Langāhs and resembling in vigour the productions of the old Arab poets, the '*kāfī*' or '*wāī*', generally amatory, the '*baīta*', or couplets sung to the *tambūr* or guitar, the '*dohad*' accompanied on the '*duhad*' or kettledrum, and the '*sanyāro*', or amorous missive, sung to the music of the *nāī* or pipe and particularly popular amongst the wilder clan people.

¹ *History of Sindh* p. 77

literary cast which it owes perhaps to the ideas of Macaulay, has stimulated the study of the poems as literature. This fact, combined with the love and reverence with which the common people regard the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf, has in several generations produced a multitude of books written about the poems and the poet. Most of these books are of a very elementary type. They find their greatest interest in retelling, much in the fashion of Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, the Sindhi love stories which form so large a part of the Rīsālo. There has, however, been good work of a more scholarly calibre. The conclusion none the less hardly admits of any doubt that without the stimulus of English education and the interest in literature produced by it the poems of Shāh Abdul Latīf would still have been today in much the same condition as that in which the British found them in 1843. That is to say, they would have remained a rather vague body of sung and recited verse handed down from one singer to another and familiar, as songs, to the Sindhis who delight in listening to this form of literary composition.

The poems which I have translated do not form the complete mass of verse attributed to Shāh Abdul Latīf. They are instead the poems contained in the abridged compilation called the 'Muntakhab' arranged by Kāzī Ahmad. This collection is fully representative of the nature of the poetry and the scope of its subject matter, and forms probably the best known anthology of the poems in use today. There has lately been a tendency to expand and enlarge the volume of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry and it has not always been judiciously pursued. But fine work has been achieved by two first-rate Sindhi scholars, namely Mirza Kalich Bēg and H. M. Gurbuxānī, each of whom has produced editions and commentaries which merit the serious attention of all scholars of oriental poetry in general and of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry in particular. Other useful editions have been brought out by Līlārām Watanmal and Tārachand Showkīrām, but their scholarship is not to be compared with that of Mirza Kalich Bēg and H. M. Gurbuxānī.

The Muntakhab consists of twenty-seven poems of very unequal length in a variety of metres. The whole tone of the poetry is mystical. Shāh Abdul Latīf would, like Spinoza, be not incorrectly described as a God-intoxicated man. The poetry is deeply religious throughout and inspired by that spirit of Islāmic mysticism which is characteristic of the Sūfī poets of Persia. These poets have exercised since the sixteenth century in India a profound influence over all non-Hindu poetry. Broadly speaking, the topics with which the Muntakhab deals fall into three great classes, first, the mystery of divine love, second, the folklore of Sind in its love-stories, and third, some prominent features of the common experience of the Sind

in the country side. But whatever the topic may be, a deep mystical note prevails, whether the poet be pining for the peace and mystery of God, recounting the woes of a spiritual Sindhi lover, describing the joy of the peasant cheered by the falling of rain on the arid soil, or telling the thought of the spinning woman working at her wheel. The main ideas, expressed through a wealth of imagery in the rustic language of the common people, are concerned with the splendour and wonder of beauty, the oneness and majesty of God, the unity of experience, and the mystic union of man with the divine.

The arrangement of the poems in the *Munt il-hab* is very unsatisfactory. The poems are gathered together without coherent reference to their subject matter. They are collected under the various modes or styles of musical accompaniment to which they are sung. This haphazard arrangement is not of course without its merit. It makes clear, for instance, with considerable fidelity the utterly unstudied way in which the poetry itself was born. But it is not useful for a scholarly appraisement of the poetical worth. It is for this reason that in translating the poems I have declined to follow the order of the poems given in the *Munt il-hab*. Instead, while keeping the individual poems entire, I have rearranged them according to their subject matter in such a way as to bring out the sweep of the poet's interest. I have, therefore, divided the poems into three categories. The first contains the poems that may be described as primarily mystical in form and expression, poems of mystic and divine love concerned with the qualities of divine mercy and grace, the goodness, power and mystery of God. The second category includes the poems that describe characteristic features of Sindhi rural life, like the coming of the welcome rain, the habits of fakirs and holy men, the tragic story of Hassam and Husam, the thoughts of the spinning woman. The third category, which forms the greater bulk of the poetry, comprises the Sindhi love stories told by mothers to their children in the cradle and deeply penetrated by the affectionate sentiment of the common folk.

(b) *The mysticism of Shāh Abdul Latif*

The mysticism which runs all through the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latif is a love mysticism with a rich religious significance. It is not a philosophic mysticism. In fact the lesson of the *Risālo* could be expounded from the text of the forty-second Psalm, 'As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for the Living God. When shall I come and appear before God?' It might be paralleled also with the flaming words of Richard Rolle, 'O sweet Jesu, I bind thy love in me with a knot unable to be loosed, seeking the treasure that I desire

and longing I find, because I cease not to thirst for thee' The poems do not make easy reading unless their religious background is seen in true perspective and unless the Sūfī imagery in which so much of the thought is cast is seen in its historical setting as a development of the mystic elements of Islām which were introduced into Sind centuries ago and found there a congenial home

A few short quotations will make clear the nature of the main ideas in this mystical content The beauty of the Beloved, that is, the beauty of God which satisfies and completes the being, is described in these lines from the Sur Barvo Sindhī

' In gracious emergence when walks the Belov'd
E'en earth itself sings
" In God's name " and lo ! on the tracks of his feet
Are the road's kisses planted
The hours astounded stand by in respect
I swear by the Lord
The face of Beloved's most lovely of all '

The emphasis on the oneness of God, the unity of all experience and the need for sinking individuality in the ocean of divine union is the subject of these lines from the Sur Āsa

' Across Life's ocean no one yet
With " I " as guide his foot hath set
God indeed who is one
Adoreth oneness alone
Take twoness off to burn with fire
Existence may man's tears require
This weeping should be done
Before oneness alone '

A frequent topic is the union with God, the meeting of those separated by the vain tricks of earthly delusion till they find ultimate satisfaction in the truth and beauty of the divine This is the subject of the following lines from the Sur Maizūrī

' Restrain myself howe'er I try
I cannot stay unless I see
Beloved's face Unbounded grief
Without my love assaileth me
Avaunt tomorrow I'll not bide
By promise that tomorrow tells
I cannot wait tomorrow's day
Or meet me, love, or kill me, else
Bring union to a wretched girl
Or kill her only show her eyes
The Friend she loves Sad soul, dismiss
Thy sorrow from thy memories '

The prevailing tenor of the poetry is thus that of a religious mysticism It is not a pure love mysticism, nor a nature mysticism, nor an intellectual mysticism The characteristic imagery is that employed to describe the separation and the reunion of lovers and the language used is usually that of human love-longings The

poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf has on this account a certain superficial resemblance to the poetry of Shelley and Browning, but does not bear any close affinity to the poetry of Blake, who is a pure religious mystic. It has little in common with the poetry of Donne, whose mysticism is of an intellectual type

‘ Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass
Stains the white radiance of eternity ’

So sang Shelley and the words would be a fair description of Shāh Abdul Latīf’s attitude. It has been said of Shelley that ‘ to Shelley death itself was but the rending of a veil which would admit us to the full vision of the ideal, which alone is true life. The sense of unity in all things is most strongly felt in “Adonais”, where Shelley’s maturest thought and philosophy are to be found ’¹ When Browning says

‘ For life and all it yields of joy and woe
And hope and fear—
Is just our chance o’ the prize of learning love ’

he is speaking the same kind of language and expressing the same kind of idea as Shāh Abdul Latīf speaks and expresses in the *Risālo*. It is true that Browning uses very different imagery and has a modernity of expression quite unlike the formal Persian model of the Sindhī poet. But this outward difference merely obscures the one great quality both have in common, namely the all-importance of love as a key to understanding how God and man can meet. In complete contrast to this is the religious fervour, almost the religious madness, of Blake, which takes the form of asserting not the divinity of God but the divinity of man in his search for God and in the working of the human imagination which passes beyond the poor self-centred comprehension of the senses. In ‘The Everlasting Gospel’ Blake makes God speak to Christ

‘ Thou art a man God is no more
Thy own humanity learn to adore
For that is my Spirit of life

It was the utterance of sentiments somewhat of this kind that led at one stage of Islāmic history to the killing of Mansūr Hallāj, an early free-thinking Sūfī, whose heterodoxy was too strong for the thought of his time. Such an attitude as these words of Blake portray is, however, poles asunder from the mysticism of Shāh Abdul Latīf. The Sindhī poet is a true Muslim in that for him God and man are things apart and that approach to the divine is possible only by a long period of struggle and effort, disappointment and fatigue over which determination prevails at last. There is in

¹ Spurgeon *Mysticism in English Literature*, p 35

Blake's treatment of the struggle an intrusive element that owes little to respect for God and love of Him

' Bring me my bow of burning gold ,
 Bring me my arrows of desire
 Bring me my spear O Clouds, unfold
 Bring me my chariot of fire
 I will not cease from mental fight
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
 Till I have built Jerusalem
 In England's green and pleasant land '

In these stirring lines there appears to be a touch of the social reformer, a product of another day, and of the burning conviction so strong in Blake that man has but to use his imagination in the right way and the difficulties will vanish. So it is doubtful whether 'Jerusalem' to Blake meant what it did to the religious mystic Hilton. 'Jerusalem is as much to say a sight of peace and be-tokeneth contemplation in the perfect love of God'. But it certainly has some affinity with that 'Jerusalem the Golden with milk and honey blest' which goes back to Saint Bernard and early Christian mysticism. Wordsworth is a nature mystic, alien to the spirit of Shāh Abdul Latīf, though some of the shorter lyrical passages in the *Risālo* at times bring memories of the simple directness of the lake-land poet. The romanticism of Wordsworth would, however, have made no appeal to Shāh Abdul Latīf, brought up in the stern school of Islāmic monotheism.

That other great mystic poet Donne is in the Platonic tradition of intellectualism. Yet so strange is the mixture of influences which have brought the Platonic mysticism into English thought that there are, even in this, affinities with the Sūfī philosophy. Though Donne uses love imagery in his deeply metaphysical poems he never subordinates the reason to the dreaming self-hypnotism of the man intoxicated with God. Despite the sensuousness of much of Donne's imagery we feel that even Donne's 'extasie' falls suitably into its place in a scheme where intellect and reason reign, in the realm of the formal ideas, those perfect ensamples of the poor facsimiles open to mankind's erring sensations. This kind of rational and critical self-examination has nothing in common with the mysticism of the *Risālo*. It would none the less be possible to find in Donne passages which express certain metaphysical ideas in language almost similar to that of the *Risālo*, as for instance where self and not-self are contrasted with each other or where truth is to be attained by studying the promptings of one's own heart and not by looking outside it. The general point of view is, however, fundamentally different. For the Donne of the religious and metaphysical poems, not the Donne of the love poems, is profoundly influenced by a

rationalistic philosophy which finds little place for the mystical attitude and is indeed contemptuous of it Dr Spurgeon says that Donne holds the Platonic conception that love concerns the soul only and is independent of the body or bodily presence and that 'in the Ecstasy he describes the union of the souls of two lovers in language which proves his familiarity with the description of ecstasy given by Plotinus'¹ Donne seems to me to be an educated erudite Elizabethan talking the language of Plato and Plotinus Sir Herbert Grierson, the great authority on Donne, is profoundly impressed by the fervour of Donne's religious poetry 'He is', he says,² 'our first intensely personal religious poet, expressing always not the mind simply of the Christian as such, but the conflicts and longings of one troubled soul, one subtle and fantastic mind' This is true enough But the fervour of Donne is not to be compared with that of the true religious mystic and is very far from the clear emotional vision of Crashaw or Isaac Watts There is a certain likeness between Donne and Shāh Abdul Latīf in such a passage as this of Donne's

'But we know ourselves least mere outward shews
Our minds so store
That our soules no more than our eyes disclose
But forme and colour Only he who knows
Himselfe knowes more'

But the likeness is due to one point in common in the philosophy of the two poets, namely the difficulty that the self offers as an approach to reality But while this plays an unimportant part in Donne's ideas, it is deeply significant in Shāh Abdul Latīf's The similarities between Shāh Abdul Latīf and Watts (1674-1748) and Crashaw (died 1650) are much more remarkable

The hymn of Watts which begins

'For in the Heavens my God retires,
My God the mask of my desires,
And hides his lovely face'

and the other hymn which says

'Lord, 'tis against thy face
My sins like arrows rise'

or again the lovely poem of Crashaw's whose opening lines are

'Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek thy face,
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire
I die in love's delicious fire'

might nearly have been written by Shāh Abdul Latīf They all breathe the selfsame spirit of mystical surrender which irradiates the Risālo

¹ *Mysticism in English Literature*, p. 75

² *Metaphysical Poetry, Donne to Butler*, p. xxvii

and the turn of expression is surprisingly alike. Here the intellectualism characteristic of Donne is wholly absent. The clear difference between the two types of mysticism is manifest, that of the heart as against that of the head, of the emotions as against the intellect.

(c) *The religious character of Shāh Abdul Latīf's mysticism*

These examples from English poetry have been given in order to emphasize how far the message of the Rīsālo is like and unlike the message of the typically English mystic poets. There is in Shāh Abdul Latīf a strain of love mysticism which shows some affinity with the love mysticism of Shelley and Browning. There is nothing quite like it in Wordsworth and little in it that is common with Donne. The nearest English parallels to Shāh Abdul Latīf in his love religious mood are Crashaw and Isaac Watts. In these two poets the philosophy of love is preached in emotional language as a means to a true understanding of the nature of God and to effecting the mystic union with the divine by lifting the false veil of the phenomenal world and probing the depths of the human heart. The true message of the Rīsālo, however, is religious and there is a real difference in this respect between the Sindhī poet and Shelley and Browning. While Shelley and Browning see in love the key to understanding the world, Shāh Abdul Latīf finds it in union with God through the difficulties and vicissitudes of love. Love is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Although the love mysticism of Shelley and Browning has a philosophic depth which takes it outside any assimilation to eroticism, the scheme of things in which, for them, difficulties dissolve and disturbances are reconciled in peace, is a unity that comes from a union of lovers thinking similar thoughts and finding complete satisfaction in the loving relationship.

Shāh Abdul Latīf is not satisfied with such a solution. He finds his solution instead in the submissive sinking of individuality in the divine and in a conception of God which is truly Muslim. It insists upon the utter unworthiness of man when compared with the majesty, mystery and completeness of God. Thus love for Shāh Abdul Latīf is merely the means of approaching the divine. It is not a description of the divine itself. Read the solemn dedication to God with which the Muntakhab opens

' In the beginning Allah is
Who knoweth all, who sits aloft
The Lord of all the world that be
He is the mighty, old of days
Of His own power established
He is the Lord, One, only One,
Sustainer and Compassionate
Sing ye the praise of Him who heals,
The True One, sing ye praise of Him

To get an English parallel to this sustained attitude of worship we must go to the predominantly religious hymns where we find something very like it

‘ O worship the King,
All glorious above
O gratefully sing
His power and his love
Our shield and defender,
The Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendour
And girded with praise

Thus despite all the love mysticism with which the *Risālo* abounds, its import is deeply religious. Its object is the respectful adoration of something far above ordinary human endeavour. We shall look in vain in Shelley or Browning for this attitude which, while typically Muslim, is also ‘Christian’ in the strain of the Old Testament, definitely Hebraic in conception and unaffected by the gospel of the New Testament. Even Blake, the greatest and most comprehensive of the English mystic poets, fails to reach this pinnacle of single-minded adoration. Blake is so overcome with other ideas of the complexity of the divine and he is so obsessed with the power of the human imagination to rake reality that he cannot confine himself to a jejune monotheistic attitude. Isaac Watts, who does soar to the heights of adoration, is nearer Shāh Abdul Latīf but he is a poet of much narrower range.

In fact to give any idea of the complicated mysticism of the *Risālo* we must recognize it as a blending of many elements. It has something of the love idealism of Shelley and Browning, something of the wild religious fervour of Blake, and something also of the simple human conviction of Watts and Crashaw. So complex a phenomenon is mysticism in Islām and Christianity and so intimately have the two been at various stages inter-related that it is possible to trace in each influences that have gone to the making of both. Islām has been little affected directly by the Christianity of the New Testament but it has many contacts with the religion of the Old Testament and with the old Greek philosophy. This philosophy started with Plato and rose to intellectual mysticism in Plotinus whence it reached a religious consummation in Iamblichus and Dionysius the Areopagite and so produced much of the typically Christian mysticism of the middle ages in Europe. It was about this period that the language of the Arabs formed the chief means of communication of ideas between East and West. By that time Islām itself had become deeply penetrated with the thinking of Persia and was not wholly closed to Buddhist and Vedānta ideas. The history of mysticism is thus a complicated story of the fusion

and blending of a vast body of beliefs that came in different ways from a limited number of sources

(d) *Variety of poetical moods in the Risālo*

Of the great variety of lyrical poems which constitute the Risālo of Shāh Abdul Latif some description may now be given. There are short ecstatic poems of deep emotional content of the kind found in Watts, Crashaw and Clough. There are purely religious hymns whose sustained eloquence recalls the psalms of David and whose appeal and diction are very similar to those of Christian hymnology, like

' For thee, mine own dear country,
Mine eyes their vigils keep '

and

' For ever with the Lord,
Amen so let it be '

and

' I'm but a stranger here,
Heaven is my home '

In contrast to these there are psychological questionings and interrogations that read like Browning and there are gems of the pure lyrical spirit that remind us of Shelley and Wordsworth. Some of the finest examples of this singing mood in its highest perfection are found embedded in the long Sindhi love narratives. For instance, there is the beautiful lyric in the Sur Suhinī which begins

' Oh sisters ! how the tinkling bell
Has set my limbs to sprightly dance
To stranger folk how may I tell
The love that doth my heart entrance ' '

There is that other song, scarcely less lovely, from the same Sur which starts

' My heart of its hopes is shorn
No strength within me lies
Come back to me now my love
O Sāhir lordly and wise

Above all there is the magnificent collection of lyrics about rain which comprise the Sur Sārang

' See saith Latif, the sombre cloud
Hath lowered and the big-dropped rain
Is fallen. Take the cattle out
And make your way across the plain
Desert your huts, your panniers fill
Against the need of coming hours
It is no time in God-despair
To sit and idle. Lo ! it showers !

It is in such songs that Shāh Abdul Latīf reaches his highest summit as a poet talking the universal language of poetry, not bound by any restriction of time, place or narrow mood. The beautiful short song of gladness for the company that the rain brings would not disgrace Shelley

‘ The season’s here
Glad converse and sweet music sound
Shrills cuckoo clear
The ploughmen fit their ploughshares for the ground
Herdsmen are happy Yea ! his bright array
For joyous rain my friend has donned today ’

In yet another mood is the Sur Kēdāro, the ballad of the sorrow of Muhurram, the deaths of Hassan and Husain, the tragedy of Kūfa and Kerbela which has ever since divided the Muslim world into two camps, the descendants of the Prophet and the Khalifs, the Shīas and the Sunnīs, the believers in personal transmitted holiness and the believers in the impersonal majesty of the Prophet’s unending mission

‘ Come, O thou Lord Muhammad, come,
Causer of Causes, rise
An early dove from Kerbela
Its weary journey flies
Halting by God’s apostle’s tomb
It uttereth this doom
“ Muhammad, Causer of Causes, Lord,
Come, rise up in thy might
The glitter of the flashing sword
Hath shone before my sight ” ’

Yet another note is struck in the flirtatious liveliness of the Sur Līlan Chanēsar. This deals with a broken love match in a spirit that is nearly flippant and somehow succeeds in combining flippancy with dignity. In much the same gay abandon is written the Sur Kapāṭī where a pleasure-loving spinning girl is upbraided for her laziness. The longer love poems are a medley of emotions. Sometimes the plain facts of the lovers’ trials are described. More often the treatment is deeply psychological, busy not with the fate of the lovers but with the effect events have on the lovers’ minds. Narrative is continually subordinated to introspection and soliloquy. We feel that the poet is interested not so much in the sad plight of Suhinī, Sasūi and Mārūi as in the manner these unlucky creatures bore their afflictions and trials so that they found a way of release in self-examination and in self-fulfilment. There are few of the deeper-seated feelings on which the genius of Shāh Abdul Latīf does not play cunningly in that strange mixture of thought and emotion in which his music sings. Such is the stuff of all real poetry, combining elegance and rhythm of language with that sense of a distant far-off

beauty which men reach with difficulty, stretching out their hands in longing for the further shore 'Poetry', says Wordsworth, 'is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge' Through a sensuous musical medium the search goes on for truth and beauty while endeavour seeks to pierce through the changing phantasmagoria of experience to discover behind the unity of things diverse

' I too have seen
My vision of the rainbow aureoled face
Of her whom men name Beauty proud, austere,
Divinely fugitive, that haunts the world ¹

This is the poet's quest Shāh Abdul Latīf is amongst those whose words have helped to lift the veil that obscures the vision of delight and fulfilment

¹ 'The Dominion of Dreams' quoted in Richard's *Principles of Literary Criticism*, p 19

CHAPTER III

A WEB OF MANY STRANDS

(a) *A mixture of influences*

IN dealing with a cultural heritage so complex as that of Sind, the scholar will perceive that many diverse influences have gone to its fashioning. Furthermore, the cultural heritage of Sind came to fruition in the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latif at a time when the Moghul Empire was showing clear signs of its ultimate dissolution. Naturally, therefore, the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latif would conform to the general type of poetry produced in similar conditions during the early part of the eighteenth century under the Moghul dominion. Evidence can easily be produced to prove this. But in the case of Sind there were certain peculiar circumstances which cannot be omitted from consideration. The chief of these are the comparatively late conversion of the bulk of the population to Islām, and the absence of any considerable body of native literature in the Sindhi language. The latter phenomenon is due to the fact that the intelligentsia of the province was drawn mostly from the learned and privileged classes, many of them not original inhabitants of Sind but immigrants who arrived at various stages of the Muslim domination. Moreover the learned languages were Persian, and, to a lesser degree, Arabic.

The practice of the Moghuls was certainly to encourage in India the development of poetry on the Persian model with which they were familiar in the court of Delhi. It was thus inevitable that when poetry was written it should assume the same general form and deal with subjects similar to those dealt with by the great Persian masters. It was during the Moghul régime that Urdu poetry began to be written in considerable quantity. But some time elapsed before work of high merit was produced in that medium. There is a great similarity in form and manner of treatment of subjects in Indian, Persian and Urdu poetry. The reason for this is, as explained above, the dominance of the Persian language as the language of the court, of literature and of polite intercourse generally. The position was in some ways rather akin to that in England for the first two centuries after the Norman conquest when French was the language of the court and the nobles and a vernacular literature had not been established. By the time of Shāh Abdul Latif there were, however, a sufficient number of learned persons imbued with the

ideas of Persian and Urdu poetry and beginning to transfer their thoughts into the medium of the vernacular. But when this stage was reached the Persian mould and the Persian treatment of subjects were so strongly established that it was impossible to dispense with them.

The importance of Shāh Abdul Latīf, however, is that he did succeed in breaking away to some extent from the prevailing intellectual domination. He found in the life of the country people, in their everyday doings and in folk stories current amongst them a subject for poetical treatment which brought out the inherent genius of the Sindhī language. But he could not go beyond a certain stage in this progress. I have myself not the slightest doubt that one great reason for the popular appeal of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry is the fact that it was the first great attempt to interpret the feelings of the populace in language that all, both Muslim and Hindu, could understand, and that he was the first successful poet who spoke a language that everyone could accept not merely as literature or as a highly artificial construction of words but as something that everyone felt. During the Muslim domination of Sind from the fourteenth century onwards the thoughts and religion of the Hindu population received but scant acknowledgement in the literary forms of the day. But there was a great body of Hindu semi-belief and Hindu predilection still lying dormant in the country and not fully catered for by the Manghanhārs, Bhāts and inferior wandering minstrels who supplied the common people with their music and their rough verse for weddings and festivals and similar ceremonies. Some of this dormant semi-belief was always at the back of Shāh Abdul Latīf's mind. He was adept at fashioning it, inside the Persian model, in such a way that it appealed to a much wider public than could have been approached by poetry written in the manner of the Moghul court poets and of the Urdu poets who consciously imitated the Persian model, often in the most slavish way. But this does not alter the fact that the poetry of the Rīsālo is Islāmic poetry with an appeal which was wider than the Islāmic poetry of the day and was accepted by the non-Islāmic elements as something that had a message for them too. It was so superior to the rhymes and jingles of the wandering Hindu bards that its predominance was from the very first assured. The conclusion, therefore, must be that the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf, while essentially Muslim and based on Persian influences current in the educated world of his day, reached beyond that to a body of thought and belief that had a more general appeal. The music to which the poems were sung was essentially Indian, that is to say, Hindu in origin, as we know from the names of the tunes to which the poems were and still are sung. Furthermore,

the Sūfī strain of thought which permeates the whole of the verse has in Sind always had an appeal to Hindus, though to what extent this appeal is due to its being influenced by Hindu religious ideas is a subject of the greatest obscurity. Enough has been said to show that the poems are a web of many strands, which it is now my business to disentangle.

(b) *Arabian influences*

The chief strands which can be identified are Arabian, Persian, Indian (including in that term the influences of Urdu poetry, Hindu music and local folklore), Balūchī and Sūfistic. The Arabian influence in Sindhi verse is very small. The history of the land accounts partly for this. Sind was under Arab governors for a period of nearly three hundred years—the names of the Governors during the Ummāyid period are known in detail. It remained under Arab influence for a considerably longer period when the early dynasties of Multān and Mansūra were in power in Upper and Lower Sind till nearly the end of the tenth century A.D. Yet the Arabs left no permanent impress upon the land. The reason is that they were merely a military garrison living amongst strangers with whom they did not mingle. Often their position was very insecure. With the Qarmatian dynasties, which succeeded the Qaraishite Ghālībīs and Halbānīs when Sind ceased to have Arab governors sent to it from the Ummāyid empire, there arose independent Sind dynasties amongst which the Sūmra soon became prominent. The Sūmra were a local dynasty of Rājput origin. Tod in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rājasthān* identifies them with the Parmār or Puār race. But the verifiable history of these people is obscure and the authorities are all unsatisfactory. Ray believes 'that southern Sind was never thoroughly conquered by the house of Ghaznī and with the first sign of decay the Sūmra, a local tribe living in the vicinity of the Tharī, established their supremacy in that region. According to the *Tārīkh-i-Tāhūrī* their territory included Ālōr in the north and their capital was Muhammad Tūr in the pargana of Dīrak, identified by Elliot with Shakapūr a populous village about ten miles south of Mīrpūr on the borders of Tharr' (Elliot, I, pp. 256, 403, 404).

Whatever the real facts be, it is certain that the influence of the Arabs in Sind had long been waning before they ultimately ceased to be a power in the land. The very small cultural influence they exerted in the days of their supremacy had disappeared long before the twelfth century. What conditions were in the days of Arab domination has been characterized by Ray as being largely in the nature of a military occupation. 'The land was held by Arab garrisons supported by grants of land. They were probably mainly

concentrated in the important cities and were possibly assisted by levies of Sindian troops. The internal administration of the country was necessarily left largely in the hands of Hindu landlords paying the land tax (kharāj) and the capitation tax (jizyā).¹ Masūdī says that the Arab merchants at this period formed the commercial communication between Sind and the neighbouring countries of India. They brought the produce of China and Ceylon to the sea-ports of Sind and from there conveyed them by way of Multān to Turkistān and Khurasān. Islām continued to spread but not rapidly, and the conquerors followed a policy of toleration, adopting stern measures of repression only when resistance was offered, as at Daibul, to the armies of Islām. Towards the end of the tenth century Sind was infected by Qarmatian heresies from Egypt. Mahmūd of Ghaznī found Mansūra in the occupation of an Ismailī sect with this Ismailī belief.

It is thus clear that the Arab penetration of Sind was of a very partial character affecting only a small portion of the population and that the effects were entirely lost in the course of the succeeding centuries. The conversion to Islām of the agricultural indigenous peoples of Sind took place at a much later stage of the Muslim conquest of Upper India when Arabian ideas and thoughts were of much less importance than Persian in the world of Islāmic India. In fact Sind was converted to Islām not by the Arabs but by the central Asian peoples who took up the tale of Muslim penetration of India from the twelfth century onwards. All through the reign of the Sūmro and Sammo dynasties this Islāmic penetration proceeded and by the time of the Lōdī Afghāns in the sixteenth century the agricultural population and the land-holding class were almost entirely Muslim, the Hindu population being confined to the business of writing and to trade and commerce. This was largely the state of affairs that persisted down to the British annexation in 1843. Thus the cultural influence of the Arabs, never very strong, has disappeared entirely except for a few minor details, because Sind became a predominantly Muslim land at a time when Central Asian influences, and Persian influences, were at full strength. Such, however, is the importance of Arabic in the cultural heritage of all Muslims that some slight effect has been maintained through the religious vitality of the language for the purposes of the Muslim faith.

We need not be surprised, therefore, that though Arabic has always been known and spoken in Sind by a few learned men and though the Korān is known by heart by large numbers of devout Muslims in the province the effect of Arabic on the poetical literature of Sind is negligible. It is possible, however, to underestimate this

¹ Rāy, *Dynastic History of Northern India* I p. 21

effect The powerful rhythm of the Arabic language and the practice of musical intoning which is to some extent acquired in the mosque by every Muslim brought up in the tenets of his faith have certainly done something to mould the form of poetical composition amongst Muslims They have done more to standardize the nature of the music that appeals to them It has already been stated that the poetry of the Rīsālo had its birth in music and singing Though this music is actually Indian music, it has not been unaffected by Muslim practice For it is noteworthy that much of the best music and singing is associated with religious observance at tombs and shrines of Muslim saints

The connexion is therefore clear But it is difficult to fill out the picture in detail The chief kinds of serious poetical composition cultivated by Sindhis have been 'madahs', 'munājāts', 'marsiyāhs' and 'kowārs' or 'lānats' The first are praises of God, the Prophet and Saints The second are the religious hymns *per se* The third are elegies generally concerned with the martyrdom of Hassan and Husam The fourth are compositions which deal with the moral virtues and the vices of mankind Naturally, in a Muslim land the virtues and vices are those of the kind set out in the religious teaching Such compositions are common to the whole Muslim world and there is in them nothing that can be ascribed to Arab influence specially Of lighter forms of composition Sindhi boasts *fatehnāmos* or songs of victory, *kāfis* or *wāis*, a form of amatory verse, *baita* or couplets and *sanyāros* or love messages Of these only the *fatehnāmos* bear any resemblance to the old Arab poetry But the reason for that perhaps is that songs of victory must necessarily assume a rather restricted form from the very nature of the subject matter The other lighter and amatory verse of Sind can be shown to have a closer resemblance to Persian than to Arabic models, and to possess a local character This is only to be expected of such forms of composition in a Muslim land that has for several hundred years had a fairly self-contained individuality of its own The Rīsālo contains many quotations from the Korān and has many Arabic words But this is only natural and means no more than that Sind, like the rest of the Muslim world, had its full share in the freemasonry of Muslim culture

Sūfistic thought has been very prominent in Sind at various times and this naturally implies that many of the forms of expression and the terms of language employed in Sūfism would find a place in the language and literature of the province The Sindhi language is a Sanskritic language with a large Arabic and Persian vocabulary which shows the historical development of the Sindhi culture But it would be wrong to infer from this that the Sindhi literature

displayed in the *Risālo* depends to any great extent upon the Arabian influences which at one time had a chance to imprint themselves deeply upon the country. What Arabian influences still remain are due to the character of the predominant religion and the cultural effects which flowed from that predominance over Muhammadan India generally. The Muslim idea of music as part of the service of God has also played some part in the making of Sindhī poetry. In so far as this has occurred it may be said that Arab influence is still alive in Sindhī poetry. Ghazzālī has described this union of music with thought and religion in beautiful words. 'The seventh (kind of listening),' he says, 'is the listening of him who loves God and has a passion for Him and longs to meet Him so that he cannot look upon a thing but he sees it in Him (whose perfection is extolled) and no sound strikes upon his ear but he hears it from Him and in Him. So listening to music and singing in his case is an arouser of his longing and a strengthener of his passion and his love and an inflamer of the tinder box of his heart and brings forth from it states consisting of revelations and caressings description of which cannot be comprehended. he who has tasted them knows them and he rejects them whose sense is blunt so that he cannot taste them.'¹ Doubtless there is something of this kind of spirit breathing in the beautiful poem of Shāh Abdul Latīf called the *Sur Sōrath*, which uses a common folk-story to convey something of the mystery that brings the music listener into communion with the divine. In that poem the singer, the 'master of music', is depicted as charming the king so overwhelmingly as to induce him to yield up his head to the singer in loving sacrifice which gains him communion with God.

' Welcome thou art, O man of music,
Thy meaning's drift I knew. What thy tongue sped
I comprehend completely, all thy words
What falleth to the ground
Be pleased to take ' All three in tune were wed,
The music's chords, the dagger and the neck
' For no such prize O man of music,
Hast thou, ere this, made journey. God be praised,
O man of music, that thou soughtst the head '.

Here in this unlikely form may be seen arrayed in lyrical garb that doctrine of religious ecstasy in music which Ghazzālī, the great scholastic gathering the message of Arab thought, has expounded with word and argument that recall some of the higher flights of St Thomas Aquinas. Thus despite the broken contact of Sind with Arabia there may still be heard in the songs of Shāh Abdul Latīf a few deep echoes of an earlier Muslim scholasticism.

¹ *J R I S* 1901 p. 229

(c) *Persian influences*

The Persian influences in the *Risālo* are much stronger than the Arabian and for a very good reason—Persian was the language of polite intercourse and of conventional poetry in the days of the Moghuls. It was thus inevitable that any poet not writing under the influence of a Sanskrit culture should either consciously or by mere habit follow the style of Persian poetry in which he had been brought up. To what extent Shāh Abdul Latīf was acquainted with the great Persian poets we do not know. There is no evidence that he had studied any of them except Jalāluddīn Rūmī, a copy of whose '*Masnawī*' was said to be constantly in his hands. The *Masnawī* has been called the *Korān* of Persia. Professor Nicholson says of it 'Its author professes indeed to expound the inmost sense of the prophetic revelation but any one looking through the work at random can see that its doctrines, interwoven with apologues, anecdotes, fables, legends and traditions, range over the whole domain of medieval religious thought and life. The poem has been well described as "an attempt to purify the religious sentiment by love"'.¹ Apart from this essentially literary and religious influence, exerted through the work of a supreme master of the Persian idiom, upon the expression and thought of Muslim India during its most flourishing days, there is the not less powerful domination which Persia itself exerted over the Islām of the Abbāsīd period, when the Arabic influences declined and the Persian influences attained a supremacy which was never shaken off. 'Under the dominion of Islām', says Professor Lehmann, 'the individual life of the Persians developed into a strong network of roots which has become the basis upon which the culture of the Eastern Caliphate—though it goes by an Arabian name—has been built from its politics, customs and dress to its arts, science and poetry, even to its religious innovations'.² Thus as the Arab race began to lose their predominance, their place was taken by the Persian race, and thereafter so well did this Persian penetration succeed that in the Muslim history of India from the time of the fall of the Abbāsīd empire onwards the chief cultural influence has come from Central Asian peoples who were completely enthralled by Persian culture.

The Muslim domination of Upper India was completed by the inroads of men of Turkish and Mongol race who in their turn assimilated with gladness the lessons of Persian Islāmic culture. It is this which explains the typical nature of Muslim poetry in India from the thirteenth century onwards. It is this which accounts for the slavish imitation of Persian models adopted by the Urdu poets.

¹ *The Legacy of Islām* p. 234

² *Mysticism*, pp. 59-60

who began at a later stage another form of Islāmic expression in a language which was itself the result of the mingling in India of peoples who had themselves no Persian and Arabian tradition of their own. The influence of the court in moulding literary expression has already been explained. Another link in the strength of this Persian literary dominance of Upper India was the Sūfī philosophy which, expressed most felicitously in poetry by the great Persian masters, found in India and in Sind particularly a very congenial home. The fact that Sind was the home of several skilled exponents of Sūfī thought during the middle ages accounts fully for the mastery of Sūfī expression exhibited by Shāh Abdul Latīf. In these circumstances it is of course inevitable that there should be great similarities between the ideas of the *Risālo* and the thought of the typical Persian poets. Nor need we account for these similarities by arguing that Shāh Abdul Latīf must have been familiar with the work of many of the Persian masters. Even if he had known only Jalāluddīn Rūmī and known nothing of Jāmī, Farīduddīn Attār, Bāyazīd of Bistām, Hāfiz, Sadāi, or Abu Sayīd Abu'l Khair, the explanation would be fully sufficient. For the particular type of thought and expression seen to perfection in Jalāluddīn Rūmī and Jāmī was a kind of closed field where the ideas themselves were few in number and where the wealth of imagery, immense as it is, was confined to a certain definite range of symbolism capable of easy and effective assimilation. Actually it would have been enough for the author of the *Risālo* to be familiar with the *Masnawī* alone. But it is of course most unlikely that he had not at least a smattering of the work of other Persian poets. We do not need, however, to assume this in the circumstances, as anyone who was familiar with the *Masnawī* would have known as much as was necessary for the complete exposition of similar ideas covering the whole field of Persian Sūfī idealism.

With these remarks we may confine our attention to pointing out some of the similarities in the *Risālo* to the work of the great Persian masters. Compared with Jalāluddīn Rūmī, Jāmī, or Farīduddīn Attār, the Sindhi poet is cast in a much more homely and simple mould. He has not the sweep of thought, or the wealth of imagination of those great poets. His philosophy is expressed in comments and asides and not in the beautifully sustained argument that draws upon an amazing power to find beauty in the most unlikely things. In comparison with the achievements of the great Persian masters Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry is as the miniature of the plaque artists when set beside the great canvases of Michael Angelo or Rafael, or as when the minor elegances of the light operas of Sullivan or Offenbach are put in juxtaposition with the magnificent music of

great operatic composers like Wagner or Verdi. The work is fine but it is on an infinitely lower plane of achievement. Excellent in a humble way though it be, it is not in the same class. Shāh Abdul Latif is at his best when he is painting in vivid language the delight of the rain falling on a barren land and is drawing therefrom the lesson of the goodness and generosity of God, or when he is depicting the sorrow of the crane divorced from the flock of cranes, left alone in the marsh when its companions have flown away, and the fowler's net threatens the straggler with destruction. Or again he is in his most effective mood when describing the feelings of abandonment felt by the woman separated from her lover on the distant bank of the river she will never cross, and hearing the sounding of the tinkling buffalo bells that comes from the further shore. This is high art. But it is not the highest. The *Risālo* has nothing comparable with this passage from Jāmī

' See where the tulip grows
In upland meadows, how in balmy spring
It decks itself and how amidst its thorns
The wild rose rends its garment and reveals
Its loveliness. Thou too, when some rare thought
Or beauteous image or deep mystery
Flashes across thy soul canst not endure
To let it pass but hold'st it that perchance
In speech or writing thou mayst send it forth
To charm the world '¹

Shāh Abdul Latif has much to say of the beauty of the Beloved but he never rises to such a height as this.

Or take this passage from the 'Masnawī' dealing with the hollowness of individuality as cutting mankind off from the union with the divine

Where are we and I ? There where our Beloved is
O thou who art exempt from us and me
Who pervadest the spirits of all men and women
When men and women become one, Thou art that One
When their union is dissolved lo ! Thou abidest
Thou hast made these us " and me " for this purpose
To wit to play chess with them by thyself '²

Such sublimity of expression will be looked for in vain in the verses of the Sindhi poet

Yet when Shāh Abdul Latif is drawing a moral from some little everyday occurrence or stating the simple conviction of the Oneness of things, the delights of union with God, or the pangs of separation,

¹ Translated in *Wisdom of East Series* Jāmī (Hadland Davies) 'Yūsuf-Zulaikha' p. 71 sqq.

² *The Spiritual Couplets of Maulāna Jalāluddīn Rūmī* Translated by Whinfield p. 31.

he can be fully as effective as any of the great Persian poets. Many of his shorter passages would not disgrace them. He has the faculty of stating a simple truth in telling language with an appropriate turn of phrase or an apt and picturesque metaphor. A few examples will suffice. In the Sur Dāhīr he sings

‘ O may the Lord cause wind to blow
That joineth friends together
Go, that way choose, lest heart may lose
All hope of kindly weather
O Allah, like thy name, as great
My hope is Vast, unbounded,
Thy patience reigns Creator, Lord,
Within my soul is founded
The name of Thee, as sweet it be,
So lives my great hope sweetly
No door like Thine is I have seen
Of doors my round completely ’

In the Sur Rīp occur these lines

‘ All day my heart is out of place
As strays the herd of camels far
I loved no love to love displace
My head is cloudy from mine eyes
The misty fogbanks do not rise
Within my heart hath rained today
The plenteous showering of my love
Beloved, come, and carefully
Look after me for I am wrapped
In separation and entrapped

Then in the Sur Āsa, in a more religious and solemn strain, we find

‘ On self alone while eyes be set
No truth of worship canst thou get
First kill all life’s emprise
Say word of sacrifice
What-No-Existence-Knows hath grace
To raise the slave to lofty place
Who secret are in their heart
Are secret in outward part ’

Perhaps the true conclusion is to say that the genius of the Sindhi poet is essentially lyrical. It is neither philosophic nor discursive. While he has complete command of the ideas that live in the greatest of the Persian poets, he feels in himself the power not so much to expatiate on these as to use the shorter love-song to convey the impression by suggesting the background of solemn reality which can give a deep meaning to the most trivial occurrences of daily life. But everyone familiar with the Persian poets will be able to find in Shāh Abdul Latīf clear evidence that his thought is compact throughout of the same intellectual material as has been used with supreme skill by masters like Jalāluddīn Rūmī and Jāmi. Beyond that it is perhaps not safe to generalize.

(d) *Balūchī influences*

There are certain features of the poems of the Rīsālo which make it desirable to consider the possible influence of Balūchī poetry upon the work of Shāh Abdul Latīf. The Balūchīs have been in Sind for many generations. Their political importance, however, dates from the time when they were called in by the Kalhōra in the eighteenth century to stiffen the military forces at the disposal of the Prince of Sind. Long before that, however, tribes of Balūchīs were settled in various parts of the country. As we know from Withington's misadventures in Sind in 1613 the Balūchīs in the lower part of the country at that time had no good reputation for law-abiding habits. Upper Sind, however, rather than Lower Sind was the chief region to attract them, and it is chiefly in what are now the Upper Sind Frontier, the Lārkanā and the Sukkur districts that most of the Balūchī population was found. The Upper Sind Frontier district is still a kind of Balūchī preserve. Shāh Abdul Latīf was a man of Lower Sind. He spent most of his life there. But he had travelled widely for his day and must have been familiar with Balūchī custom and ways of life. Besides, in the Kōhīstān and Kōtrī localities not far from his own residence there must have been many Mēkrānīs and other inhabitants of the southern Balūch country.

Now the poetry of the Balūchīs is remarkable in several ways. It is popular in origin and form. As Longworth Dames has shown, 'There are no ghazals, no artificial arrangements of poems in dīwāns, none of the pedantry of Persian prosody. Balūchī poetry is simple and direct in expression and excels in pictures of life and country which it brings before us without any conscious description on the part of the singer. As might be expected in a parched-up land where water is scarce and rain seldom falls, the poets delight in describing the vivid thunderstorms which occasionally visit the mountains and the sudden transformation of the countryside which follows a fall of rain.'¹ But apart from this simple untutored expression Balūchī poetry is remarkable for the fact that it is wholly oral and that it is sung by professional minstrels called Dōms or Dōmbs who sing the songs in the gatherings of the clans. This oral tradition is exceedingly strong. By means of it a very considerable body of verse has been handed down from one generation to another. Some of this poetry consists of love songs and lyrics, some of it is religious and didactic. Of the former kind, some poems are love songs pure and simple, but others, says Dames 'are tinged with Sūfism and hide a religious meaning under amatory language.'² There are compositions called dastanāghs sung to the music of the flute or nai

¹ *Popular Poetry of the Baloches*, pp. xv-xviii

² *ibid.*, p. xxvi

which are very similar to the sanyāros of Sind. It is not, therefore, fanciful partly to ascribe the simplicity and directness of Shāh Abdul Latīf's best poetry to the influence of or to influences similar to those found in Balūchī poetry current in Sind. When some of the poems are examined a little more closely the conviction is strengthened that the poetry of Sind and that of Balūchistān have certain elements in common.

There are many references to 'Sindh' in Balūch poetry. It is true that Sind so used means not the modern political division thus named but the valley of the Indus. But there remains the undoubted fact that some of the localities mentioned as in 'Sindh' are actually Sindhi places, in the country that lies in the Indus valley south of Multān and reaches far down the river on its way to the sea. The Dōms also speak amongst themselves a dialect of Sindhi or Western Punjābī. One important point is that the poetry is the outpouring of countrybred people who dislike living in towns, just as the modern Balūchī in Sind prefers the open fields to a house in a street inhabited by others. Dames states that Balūchī love verse shows that the bazaar atmosphere is to some extent tempered by a breeze from the desert. 'The Balūchī is not a born townsman, but only a chance visitor and although his love may be set on a lady of the bazaars he often draws his images from nature. The clouds, the rain, the lightning, the creeping plants, the flame of the log fire share the realm of jewels and scents and show that the author is not a town bred man'.¹ Now this is a characteristic of the poems of the Risālo also. They are concerned with the open-air life of a population that works and lives largely in the fields, turning the river waters on to the land, and gathering the grain from the threshing floor into the large earthenware jars that hold a home food-supply sufficient to last till the floods of the Indus inundate the lands once again in the due fulfilment of the seasons.

To Sind, properly so called, there are many references in Balūchī poetry. There is mention of a war between the Jatōis and the Mazārīs, tribes strongly represented in Sind, and the Indus is personified under the name of Khwāja Khizr, an old man clothed in green. 'The Mazārīs untied a boat from the ferry and let it float in the Khwāja's waves'.² As it stands this might be a description of the annual floating of the rafts to the river god that takes place on the Indus at Sukkur near Dīn Bēlo. Again mention is made of the effeminacy that comes from dwelling too much on the plains away from the hard life of the barren hills. 'Drunkards', sings the Balūchī bard, 'are the young men of the Sindh country: there is much water and bhang is cheap and wood

¹ *Popular Poetry of the Baluchas*, p. xxvii

² *ibid.*, p. 73

is plentiful near their houses ' ¹ Another poem says, ' Let no one cherish my Pīr, the Husainī, son of light and fosterer of the poor, Murād Buksh Shāh who comes down in a light to his disciples also Shāhbāz, the generous to his friends, a firm embankment erected by the Ruler of the Faithful ' ² This is a reference to the famous Sindhi saint Sayid Muḥammad Husain called Pīr Murād whose tomb is in Tatta, and to whom is attributed the saying, ' It is better to restore one dead heart to eternal life than life to a thousand dead bodies ' The Shāhbāz is of course the famous Lāl Shāhbāz, or Jīvelāl, the ' living Pīr ' whose shrine at Sehwan attracts a great gathering of both Mussulmāns and Hindus every year in a strange mixture of worship.

But more interesting than all these allusions from the point of view of the Rīsālo are references to a Bhuimpūr, to Kach or Kēch, and to the men of Ārō in one poem. It seems impossible that this can be more than a variant of the folk-story which is the inspiration of the longest collection of germane poems in the Rīsālo, the tale of Sasuī and Punhūn. In the Sindhi form of the poem the place is called Bhambhōr, the Balūchīs come from Kēch, and the tribe to which the hero belongs is the Ārī, or the Āriānī. Actually the topography of the story is most confused. It appears to be originally a tale of Cutch and the place is Bhambhōr, the site of which is variously identified. In the Balūchī version Kach is taken to mean Kach on the borders of Upper Sind, near Sibi, or Kēch of Kēch Mokrān. Bhuimpūr is either Bhuimpūr, the town of the land, a Sanskrit form which would mean that the story dates from the time when the land was still inhabited by Jats before the Balūch invasion or else it is Bompūr or Bampūr in Persian Balūchistān. Whatever the real facts may be, it seems to be clear that the Balūchī poet and the Sindhi poet were both working upon similar material. The confusion that has resulted between Sind and Balūchī place-names must be the result of local influences and the operation of popular philology. These instances may, however, suffice to show that there has been a close interrelation between Sindhi and the Balūchī poetry though it is not possible to disentangle the character of the relationship now. The importance of rain in Balūchī poetry has been emphasized. One of the most beautiful poems in the Rīsālo deals with the wonder of the falling rain. While it would not be wise to ascribe this similarity to Balūchī influence, since rain songs are a common feature of Hindu poetry going back to very early days, it is not fanciful to think that both Balūchī and Sindhi songs of rain have something in common beyond the mere similarity of the subject matter. However that may be, Balūchīs and Sindhis have been living together long enough now to make it certain that poetical inspiration must have had some

¹ *Popular Poetry of the Baloches*, p. 35

² *ibid*, p. 146

common starting ground. The Dōms visited the villages of Sind wherever there were Balūchīs to listen to them. We should be stretching incredulity too far if we believed that none of this minstrelsy was heard by the non-Balūch population. Certainly a poet so keen to find music in words as Shāh Abdul Latīf was, can hardly have been unaffected by the music of the Balūchī singers whom he must have heard many a time.

(e) *Urdu and Hindu influences*

The influence of Urdu poetry on the Rīsālo is utterly negligible. Urdu has never been a language which has taken kindly to Sind soil. As has been made manifest already, the literary currents which played in Sind came from Persian and Arabic sources. The striking similarity in the subjects dealt with in Urdu poetry and the resemblance of some of the Sūfī thought prevalent in the Urdu poets of the eighteenth century to the subject matter of the Rīsālo and the mode of expression used by Shāh Abdul Latīf do nothing more than emphasize the predominance of the Persian literary tradition under Moghul domination. Urdu poetry is a comparative newcomer on the literary field. It is certainly younger than the natural ebullition of the vernacular languages of India. But some profit may be gained from a cursory examination of what is common to Shāh Abdul Latīf and Urdu poetry. Rām Bābu Saksena in his *History of Urdu Literature* says that the Urdu poets not only appropriated the metres of the Persian poets but also 'annexed the readymade' much expressed imagery and hackneyed themes' of these writers. 'They were imported wholesale without much regard to the origin and capacity of the Urdu language and in course of time constituted the whole stock in trade of succeeding poets'.¹ The prevailing tone of this poetry, where it was not light and amatory, was sūfistic and permeated with pessimism. The subjects dealt with commonly were complaints of hopeless love, the cruelty of the disdainful mistress, the ecstasy of love, the conventional pictures of beauty associated for ever with Persian poetry. Urdu poetry later began to be affected by the influence of Hindu poetry which tended to conventionalize it on certain narrow lines. As it is impossible to hold that such influences did not also affect poetical inspiration in seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind some of these conventionalized topics are worthy of passing mention. Common subjects in Hindu poetry are beseechings to the lover to be kind, lamentations for the absence of the loved one, complaints of the difficulty of meeting the lover because of trouble caused by the female relatives in the family, exclamations to female friends and sisters appealing for their aid

¹ *History of Urdu Literature*, p. 23

Such tricks of composition are common in the *Risālo*. Indeed the frequency with which the poet changes from the character of himself as the speaker to the character of the heroine soliloquizing, and the breaks in thought between comment by the poet on the sufferings of the heroine, and the appeals made by the heroine herself are common features of the *surs* which deal with the love stories of Sasū and Punhūn, Suhinī and Mehar, Mārūī and Mārū, Mōmul and Rāno. These breaks in the thought are unpleasant to European taste and make really effective translation unconvincing to European readers. Sometimes it would appear better if the poems were arranged in the manner of the classical Greek drama, where the soliloquies of the chief actor are answered by the wise words of the 'impartial spectator', such as occurs in the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. But to do this would spoil the native characteristics of the poetical expression and would therefore itself be inartistic. Europeans brought up in the more logical arrangement of Western poetry must therefore accept Oriental poetry as it is and make the best of it, allowing for this peculiar feature of jerkiness and lack of continuity. Doubtless the poetry of Orientals owes this untidiness to its origin in half spontaneous lyrical composition, a kind of semi-improvisation which permits thoughts to be uttered exactly as they are conceived, in a rough and unstudied order of inconsequence, the poet darting from one thought to another without great attention to logical construction. This tendency has been aided by the practice of Hindu poetry and Hindu music, where, it seems to me, spontaneity of expression is regarded as a greater merit than logical consistency.

Oriental poetry as a whole is always something of a hotchpotch. Gems of beauty and wisdom are inextricably jumbled with passages of utter bathos and banality. Except in the great Persian poets there appears to be no dissatisfaction with this untidiness. The poetry of the *Risālo* is full of these defects of arrangement. Most European readers would agree that rigorous excision of inferior passages and a severe cutting out of the poet's own comments on the psychological conflict raging in the bosom of the hero or heroine would vastly improve the poetical standard. Unfortunately Indian taste in these matters is very different and is prepared to tolerate without much criticism anything whatever that has been uttered by the poet. These faults of expression and arrangement seem to me to be particularly common in Urdu poetry where it has been influenced by the poetry of Hindustān. As the *Risālo* shares to a considerable extent in this lapse from artistic perfection, it is not perhaps unfair to trace as its origin the effect of Hindu poetry on poetical structure and the jerkiness that arises from the Indian musical accompaniment with which the poetry is inseparably associated. Indian poetry has

suffered from its too close connexion with music. There is of course an intimate relation between poetry and music, but the field of the two arts is neither co-extensive nor conterminous. Whether this truth has yet been fully realized in the East is doubtful. Until it is realized we may perhaps entertain few hopes that the poetry of India will burst the crippling bonds of convention and conservatism which now hold it fast, limiting its scope and shackling the higher flights of the imagination. The *Risālo* for all its virtues is not free from this criticism. When the poetry is so good, it is a pity that it could not have been made better by a clearer conception of what poetry is and what it has the power to achieve through the orderly arrangement of thought and a greater breadth of interest. The *Risālo* is thus a complicated web composed of many strands. Without doubt the most important of these strands is Sūfī philosophy. But discussion of this vast subject must be reserved for a later chapter of this book where it will receive the fuller treatment it deserves.

CHAPTER IV

THE EYE OF THE POET

(a) *Poetic diction and observation*

In an earlier chapter the meaning of the word 'poetry' was analysed. The analysis revealed the three essentials of good poetry first, that it must be mentally satisfying to the intelligence second, that it must have the power of producing an aesthetic content third, that it must have a musical or a rhythmical excellence In other words, the poet must have an intellectual message to deliver he must be capable of producing pleasure by expressing it and he must have some of the power of a musician What then does the eye of the poet see in common things to convert them by subtle alchemy into poetical composition ? Critics have given innumerable answers to this question, most of them partial and unsatisfactory

Sings one modern poet

' Go poet make a song about a fool
Who sought for Beauty and who found her deep
Below the ripples of a lilled pool
Where shadows sleep
Who saw her dancing in a night-lit sea
Clothed in the stars and jewelled by the moon
And caught her dreaming in a willow tree
At sun-charmed noon '

Compare this word painting and succession of vivid images with the cold logic of Bridges' *Testament of Beauty*

Yet since
the sublimation of self whereto the Saints aspire
is a self-holocaust, their sheer asceticism
is justified in them the more because the bent
and native colour of mind that leadeth them aloof
or driveth is that very delicacy of sense
whereby a pinprick or a momentary whiff
or hairbreadth motion freeth the content of force
that can distract them wholly from their high pursuit '

The passages are very dissimilar The first appeals plainly more to the emotions than to the intellect, while the second as plainly is addressed to the intellect more than to the emotions This contrast brings out the two-fold character of poetic appeal It is a search for both truth and beauty in anything Now the poetic appeal of the *Risâlo* is to be judged by precisely these principles and no other

' Printed in the *Observer* over initials A.R.U

' *Testament of Beauty*, pp iv ii + I sqd

What was the raw material out of which Shāh Abdul Latīf fashioned his search for truth and beauty? He addressed himself constantly both to the emotions and the intellect but, as with all poets, the emphasis is sometimes on the one, and sometimes on the other. We may arrive at some conclusion on this matter by considering first, the imagery which he is fond of using, second, the details of the rustic civilization on which he loved to dwell, and third, the folk-stories round which he has sung some of his most moving songs.

The imagery employed in the *Risālo* is largely drawn from the great treasure house of Sūfī thought. Shāh Abdul Latīf was not a conscious and consistent philosopher. We do not expect to find in his poetry the wealth of imagery found in Jalāluddīn Rūmī, in Jāmī or in such a passage as this from the *Tarjiband* of Sayid Ahmad Hātīf of Isfahān

' O Hātīf, the meaning of the Gnostics, whom they
sometimes call drunk and sometimes sober,
When they speak of the Wine, the Cup, the
Minstrel, the Cupbearer, the Magician, the
Temple, the Beauty and the Girdle,
Is those hidden secrets which they sometimes
declare in cryptic utterance '¹

But his poetry gives a very comprehensive idea of the prodigality of Sūfī symbolism. Here in one short passage is the imagery of the moth and the flame, and clay in the oven

' If fancy make a moth of thee
The flames thou seest, faltering not
Beloved's rare effulgence see
And enter in as bridegroom ought
Still art thou as the unbaked clay
Thou knowest not the oven is hot '

Then another passage displays the well-known imagery of the wine and the wineshop familiar to all lovers of Omar Khayyām

' If sipping hath thy fancy led
The wineshop is the place for thee
Beside the winejar lay thy head
And yielding it in bargain fee
Quaff many cups of wine instead '

The contrast between the false and the true wine which is the false and true love (*ishq majāzī* and *ishq hakīkī*) is drawn convincingly by implication

' Who dull existence would conserve?
For no such aim the lover strives
One breath from the Beloved's lips
Is better than a thousand lives
And can this skin and bone of mine
Compare with the Beloved's wine? '

¹ Translated in Browne *Persian Literature in Modern Times* pp. 296-7

The camel, that gross unmanageable animal, is symbolic of the stupid waywardness of the human heart This is how Shāh Abdul Latif employs this form of imagery

' The camel, mother, for my needs,
I brought and tied beside the tree
When he on wealth of buds might feast
He, sneaking, on the saltbush feeds,
The mean and miserable beast,
Undoing all my work for me '

Another common image in Sūfī poetry is that of the Healer or the Physician This is used frequently in the *Risālo* with great effect and the image is often combined skilfully with other typical forms of symbolism In the *Sur Kalyān* is found the following passage

' The friends who planted in my heart
The questings of my pain,
My friends have gone and from my mind
Have sorrow's fardel ta'en
Nor pleaseth the voice of the Healer now
'Tis an empty sound and vain '

In the *Sur Yaman Kalyān* the poet sings

' When there's no need no healer calls
Had Love's sore pain been in thy side
Then surely had the healers come
And healing hand to thee applied '

In the same poem the Physician is mentioned thus

' O Thou Physician, give me not the dose
That maketh well,
For I shall then be strong
To ask of me how now mine illness goes
Then never Friend may haply chance along '

For the Friend or Beloved there is a bewildering variety of symbolic expression The emphasis is usually laid on the difficulty of reaching the Beloved, or on the sorrow that comes from separation from the Friend

So the poet sings in this strain

' O lover, sit by loved one's path,
Nor weary from Friend's lattice go
The loved one mercy's medicine gives
And from thy hot wounds takes the glow

O lover, sit by loved one's path
And when from out the wineshop's store
They offer wine, keep steady head,
And go not near the vintner's door '

Or again

' I did not meet my love although
 An hundred suns to setting sped
 O let me yield my life when I
 Have seen him, hence my journey made
 I have not met my love but thou
 Art sinking to thy rest, O Sun
 The messages I give thee take
 And tell to my beloved one
 To Kēch go, say 'Twas not for me
 To meet my love, death supervened
 I ll die, be nothing utterly
 In separation from my love '

The commonest image, however, in the Risālo is the struggle on the ' path ' or the ' way ' to the Beloved, the dangers of the journey and the affliction of pursuit. This image recurs again and again in a multitude of forms and is the main symbolism in all the love stories of separated lovers. Some of this symbolism is exceedingly beautiful in its simplicity and frankness. The sand on the road, the dust on the way, the danger of the passes, the hard rocks of the mountains to be crossed before the journey can end in fulfilment are all employed to depict the idea.

O Mountain, first to my Friend
 Shall I heap up your name with scorn
 How my feet were crushed by the stones,
 How my soles to ribbons were torn
 Not a thought for me not a jot
 Of rue in your heart was borne

' 'Tis the Mountain that brings me woe ''
 This my cry to heaven will soar
 O Mountain torture me not
 I have suffered much before
 No joy do I call to mind
 I remember of grief full store '

Or again in another mood of despair the girl separated from her lover complains

My body burns With roasting fire
 I am consumed but make my quest
 Parched am I with Beloved's thirst
 Yet drinking find in drink no rest
 Nav! did I drain the ocean wide,
 'Twould grant in not one sip a zest '

In the beautiful poem of the Spinning Woman, which has a deep mystical meaning, God is the banker, the sarāf or merchant, who weighs out the spun yarn and rewards the righteous spinners according to their merits.

' Spin, tremble and spin
 Lest good luck you spurn
 Those who spin, mother, meet
 And forgather each turn
 With conceit in their hearts
 If fine yarn they spun,
 Not an ounce would the merchants
 Accept of the run
 With love in their hearts
 If they spun but poor stuff,
 The merchants would take it,
 Unweighed, as enough '

These instances of the type of symbolism and imagery used in the *Risālo* will give some idea how depth and sincerity of thought are wedded to beautiful and melodious language. Those who are familiar with the expression of Sūfī philosophy will find no difficulty in recognizing how true Shāh Abdul Latīf is to the spirit of Sūfī belief and how his simplified statement of many of the main ideas proves his ability to use the common images in a manner admirably adapted to the rustic culture which he understood so well. There is more than one passage of the *Risālo* that recalls the ecstatic exclamation of the great woman mystic Rābia. ' My God, if it is from fear of hell that I serve Thee, condemn me to burn in hell if it is for hope of Paradise, forbid me entrance there but if it is for Thy sake only, deny me not the sight of Thy face ' We may leave it at that.

The historical portion of this work has given a picture of the rural condition of Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was a land of cultivators and herdsmen, keepers of camels, buffaloes, sheep, goats and oxen, of tombs and Sayids, of dust and heat, of the annual rise and fall of the waters of the Indus but inefficiently controlled by a crude system of irrigation. For the common folk living in such a country Shāh Abdul Latīf composed his verses. The background of the poems is therefore that of a simple, unsophisticated countryside. Lacking as it does all interest in description of natural scenery, or studied portrayal of the manners of the people, the *Risālo* is not a treasure house of graphic detail of matters well known to the populace for whom the songs were sung. We shall, for instance, find in it nothing like the descriptive passages of the *Odyssey* which enable us at this late day to picture for ourselves the houses and house furnishings of the ancient Homeric Greeks, the kind of harness the horses wore, the manner in which the harvest was cut and gathered in, the tackle of the boats, or the character of the games in which the common people indulged. Shāh Abdul Latīf, like most Oriental poets, is not concerned with these things in themselves. So his references to social conditions and the life of the peasant folk are all incidental to his main purpose which

is to explore a psychological problem. But as that problem arose amongst a rustic people he cannot avoid alluding to the common things. From these *obiter dicta* scholars must now obtain their indirect knowledge of the human side of his poetry. There is surprisingly little of Sind topography in the *Risālo*. Places are indeed mentioned, mountains are named and features of Sind scenery receive passing remark. But there is nothing individually distinctive of place, mountain or scenery, nothing of the peoples of the land, and nothing whatever of the stirring political events of his own day. Where a mountain is named it is more to emphasize the danger and difficulty of crossing it than with any idea that its location and character have any human interest. His place names might be any place names for all the value they possess as guides to definite localities. Thus the knowledge of Sind and its rustic civilization to be culled from the *Risālo* is gained from the study of internal evidence and not otherwise.

Reading the poems, however, with this handicap upon us we can none the less obtain some vivid pictures of the life the people lived. The power and might of the river naturally are often referred to with the flooding of the inundation, the channels which are cut out by the force of the waters, the islands left dry, the sweep of the waters, the peril of the crocodiles that lie in the pools. Then there are landing places where the boats halt, the good banks and the bad banks, the tying up of boats and the ropes that serve so many purposes on board a boat. The camel is almost as great a stimulant of thought as the river. We learn of its bad manners, of the resting places where the strings of camels wait, of the bushes it eats, of the hobbles put upon its feet to prevent it wandering too far when it is left to graze and browse. Another topic that the poet dwells on frequently is the joy of the falling rain that brings the grass, sets the neat-herds wandering over the plains in search of pasture grounds, and brings friends together again on the grassy expanses. There are pictures of the clouds towering up to points in the sky, and the flash of the lightning from the dark sky and the humming of the rain-drops. There is the cold of the dry north wind that whistles through the flimsy grass huts and withers up the edges of the grass. Some beautiful lines in the *Sur Mōmul Rāno* tell of the prominent constellations seen in the velvet night sky of Sind. The hot sandy desert, the sand hills and the burning heat of the sun are prominent in the poems that describe the sufferings of Sasūi in her search for her Balūch lover. Of birds there is little mention, though few countries are as rich as Sind in bird life. The crane in the marsh, the crow which in Sind is a harbinger of good tidings, the vultures looking for carrion in the desert, and the *bābihō*, the desert lark, are amongst

the few birds to receive notice To domestic scenes there is a greater wealth of reference The ploughmen fit their ploughshares for the ground the Persian wheels raise the water for the crops , the whey froths within the jar The earthenware pot is baked in the potter's kiln The spinning wheels stand in the huts, and the swinging cots adorn the houses of the well-to-do The coverlets are spread upon the couches The women do their hair in a fine parting and put kohl upon their eyes There are necklets and bracelets for their decoration The gossip and scandal of the village is commented upon freely The spinning women assemble for spinning and spend the time chattering with each other The cattle bells are heard tinkling from afar The desert people live in brushwood huts surrounded by hedges and the wealthy man has a house with upper storeys, a rare event The miser is confounded by the bounty of the rain which prevents him trading on the scarcity and raising the price of grain five fold The trader packs his goods and departs on the boat for a far country to do his trafficking When the boat comes back the girl recognizes it as containing her lover by its rig and the bunting that flutters from the yards There are the many gatherings of friends when music sounds and people sit round happily in new clothes midst great gaiety There are the marriages when the crowds assemble dressed in their very best The Sayid riding in state on his noble horse has his stirrup leather seized in entreaty by persons craving for his help or intercession The bodice of the poor woman has been stitched a hundred times and her blanket is tattered and torn Imprisoned against her will, the girl refuses to wash her hair or put incense upon her head The desert women dye their coarse rough cloth in lac dye The skill of the craftsman is not so good as it used to be

' The lapidaries now are gone
 Who diamond pierced and ruby red
 But they who followed after them
 Have not the skill to work in lead
 Where craftsmen wrought of yore, the smiths
 Beat worthless pewter now instead '

A prayer is said at the tomb of the saint for the safety of the ship at sea The fakirs and holy men who wander about the land submit themselves to severe asceticism, uttering no word and roaming amongst the people ' quietly ' The minstrel decks his fiddle with tassels and rattles and sings his song The wife separated from her husband in the cold night clings to the door pin hoping that with the dawn her husband will return It is in vivid pictures of this kind that the Risālo is so rich No one familiar with Sind will dispute how true a portrayal this is of a simple rustic civilization of

husbandmen and cattle herds, and how typical it all is still of the predominant features of this agricultural countryside

(b) *The folk stories*

Despite the depth and sincerity of the mystic philosophy of the Rīsālo, it is doubtful if the poems would have attained their overwhelming popularity had it not been for the fact that several of the best known of them are written round folk stories current in the Sind countryside. The religion of the Rīsālo is thoroughly Islāmic. God has at least thirty-four different appellations, several of them from the list of the Ninety-Nine Names of God. But this would in itself be against the popularity of the poems amongst Hindus. As we have seen already, the poems are loved by all classes in Sind. The chief reason for this is the convincing manner in which they retell some well-known stories, of the kind that would appear in children's fairy books in England. In the Muntakhab there are half a dozen such stories, five of them concerned with the tales of lovers, and the sixth about a minstrel and a king. The telling and the retelling of these stories occupy most of the modern Sindhi books on the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf. There seems to be no end to the number of publications which recount in simple language the tales of the Sindhi lovers. The best work of this kind has, however, been done by Jēthmal Parsrām, who has, with a great deal of feeling and in beautifully expressed Sindhi, retold the tales in a most attractive way, showing how deeply he understands from the Hindu point of view the real meaning of the Sūfī philosophy. Jēthmal Parsrām's understanding is, however, tinged with the ideas of the Hindu Vedānta and a kind of theosophical universalism which is quite unlike the Islāmic mysticism of the Rīsālo itself. This characteristic of Jēthmal Parsrām's work is clearly brought out in his interesting volume on 'Sind and its Sūfis' which is instructive as showing the philosophical appeal of the poetry to an educated and cultured mind brought up in the tenets of the Hindu religion.

The five love stories in the Muntakhab concern themselves with the tragic tales of Sasuī and Punhūn and of Suhinī and Mehar, and the much lighter semi-comedies of Līlan and Chanēsar, Mōmul and Rāno, and Māruī and Umar. The story in each case is attractive, though overlaid with miraculous detail of the kind so popular in the East. The story of Sasuī and Punhūn is the one in which the greatest interest centres, as is evidenced by the fact that in the Muntakhab no fewer than seven of the surs are on this subject. These surs are the Sasuī Ābrī, the Maizūrī, the Kōhūārī, the Husamī, the Dēsī, the Rāp and the Dāhūr. The bulk of these together forms the greater part of the collection of poems. The quality of the

poetry in these seven suris is most uneven. Gems of the purest lyric inspiration are mixed with passages of absurd bathos and conventional soliloquizing of little merit. The Husaini, which is the longest individual poem, is one of the poorest of all. But the Sur Rip and the Sur Dāhir contain some beautiful inspired poetry.

The genius of Shāh Abdūl Latīf being purely lyrical, and lyrical inspiration being difficult to maintain for long at high levels, we shall find the poet's best work not in any single complete poem but in short passages where a pure lyric idea is expressed in simple telling language of great power. No European can understand these love stories as they stand without some idea of the nature of the stories themselves. The reason for this is that the poet is not interested in telling the story at all. He is absorbed with the feelings of the chief actors in the stories and immersed in exploring the psychology of their minds. Thus the incidents of the stories are assumed to be known, as they actually are known to all Sindhis, and only the effect of the incidents receives the poet's attention. Persons ignorant of the stories will be unable, from the actual words of the poet, to follow the sequence of events in them. An examination of the structure of these poems reveals the interesting fact that it is always the climax of the story, the dénouement, with which the poet is concerned, that particular point in the tale that sets the dramatic note of the whole. Thus in the tale of Sasui and Punhūn the interest centres on Sasui's realization that she has lost her Punhūn, who has gone off secretly with the camel train, and that she must make a long journey to find him if she is ever going to fulfil her love's ambition. In the tale of Suhini and Mehar the poet selects the tragic moment when Suhini, separated from her love by the pouring waters of the river and hearing the tinkling of the buffalo bells on the farther shore, determines to risk her life by crossing the river on an unbaked clay pot which will come to pieces in the water. In the story of Māruī and Umar, the poem deals with the agony of mind of Māruī while she was still shut up in the upper storey away from her people and had not yet been rescued. In the story of Līlān and Chanēsar, the poem deals with the disillusionment of Līlān when she finds that she has tricked herself and lost Chanēsar as well, because her stratagem to win his favour has failed. In the story of Mōmul and Rāno the poetic interest lies in the sudden conviction that comes to Mōmul that she has made a mistake and has lost her lover for ever. The poems in fact have an intense dramatic interest associated with the climax of the adventure in every case. They would make a fine subject for drama but afford only poor material for the art of the novelist.

The stories are all Hindu in origin. It is plain that most of them relate to the Sind of pre-Islām days. The story of Sasui and Punhūn

appears to have come originally from Cutch, which is a country intimately connected with Sind. Indeed the language of Cutch is considered to be a dialect of Sindhi. It is a predominantly Hindu place. In her interesting book *Cutch or Random Sketches of Western India*, written in 1839 by Mrs Postans, the author remarks that the tale of 'Soosie and Punoon' is 'a very favourite tale related as a Bhat both in Cutch and Sind'.¹ In the Cutch form the topography plainly is that of Cutch. In Sind the tale has become confused and the topography is mixed. The story wanders from Cutch over Lower Sind to Kēch Mēkrān and we have already seen that the tale has, in some form or other, been taken up in Balūchī poetry so that names nearly similar have been given as belonging to places in the land of the Balūchīs. The story must, therefore, be an old one which in the course of the centuries has taken several different local forms. The story of Suhinī and Mehar is a Punjāb tale which has found a home in Sind and it must have come into Sind through the immigration from the Punjāb of those Hindu races which form an important element in the population, as has been made clear in the Census of India volume for 1931 relating to the Bombay Presidency. The story of Mōmul and Rāno is a Lower Sind story connected with the Sōdha who live in the Thar country near Umarkōt. It manifestly relates to a period when this portion of Sind had not been converted to Islām. The tale of Umar and Mārui belongs to the same locality and seems to go back to the days when the Sūmra were the chief political power in the country, that is, to the period just after the disappearance of the Arab military governors. There is nothing in it which suggests any connexion with Islām. The locality of the tale of Līlan and Chanēsar is not so clear. But evidence points to the fact that it is a Lower Sind story and must relate to about the same period of time as the tale of Umar and Mārui. The name of Chanēsar is Sindhi and there was a Sūmro king of that name who reigned in Lower Sind for about 18 years, circa A D 1228. This was the period when nothing very definite is known about the religion of particular rulers. The Āin-i-Akbarī states that the Sūmro Rājput line of thirty-six princes reigned for five hundred years. The Tārīkh-i-Tāhīrī says that from the year of the Hīra 700 until 843 the Hindu tribe of Sūmra were the rulers of Sind. Elliot (I 4) thinks that there are grounds for believing that the Sūmra were tainted with the Qarmatian heresy as early as the eleventh century A D. However that may be, the story as it is found in the Risālo gives no indication of anything Muslim. We are justified in holding that the tale goes back to a time before this part of the country was converted to Islām. The story of Sōrath and

¹ *Cutch or Random Sketches of Western India* p 190

King Diāch, which appears as the Sur Sōrath in the Risālo, is one that comes from Cutch or Kāthiawār and must go back to the twelfth century A D at least In Shāh Abdul Latīf's version the king has become a Sultan but this does not necessarily mean anything in itself The story is plainly a Hindu tale in all essentials and not originally one that is placed in Sind

These facts will make clear the raw material of the stories in the Muntakhab The complex literary heritage of the poems will now be evident The thought and expression are Islāmīc coloured by the doctrines of the Sūfī philosophy The music is Indian The stories are Hindu, one of them from the Punjāb, two of them from Cutch or Kāthiawār, and the rest are stories of Lower Sind current amongst the Hindu peoples living on the borders of the Thar prior to the general conversion of these people to Islām From these considerations it is easy to see that the present-day Hindu peoples of Sind feel that their culture no less than the culture of Islām has gone to the fashioning of the final product The poetic eye of Shāh Abdul Latīf has seen in these plain folk-tales of long gone generations material for the composition of dramatic psychological poems instinct with the philosophy of Sūfī thought

CHAPTER V

THE MYSTIC VISION

THE poems of the *Risālo* are shot through with a deep religious mysticism. They cannot be understood without a clear idea of what this mysticism is. Like most other terms which deal with different ideas not easily reducible to simple language, 'mysticism' is a word which is consistently misused. There are particular difficulties about defining it, largely because the subject matter of mysticism is found in a sphere where ordinary language is inadequate. There is, however, little trouble in indicating the province of mysticism. Mysticism is an emotional attitude of man towards God or the divine. This emotional attitude takes two main forms, an emotional quest for union with God, 'unio', or for communion with God, 'communio', and most great mystics, so far as they are consistently devoted to one type of emotional attitude, can be clearly divided into one or other of these two classes. This is quite simple. But the matter is complicated by the fact that in addition mysticism is tinged with another element, namely the belief that by means of it man is able to apprehend truth, beauty, goodness and perfection in a manner not open to the working of the rational element. It is this second element which takes us back to the philological basis of the word from the Greek original, which has reference to the 'mysteries', matters that are hard and difficult to understand and capable of comprehension only after initiation and enlightenment. In fact the word is itself derived from 'muein', to shut the eye, and therefore has its birth in the very field of metaphor which is typical of all mystical thought. Shutting the eye has two meanings: first, not seeing with the organ of vision, which is regarded as inadequate for this kind of sight, and second, by a widening and generalizing use of thought, being able to see with the inward eye after a process of initiation. It is precisely because this relation of the outward to the inward eye is so vague and ill-defined and has been explained in so many different ways by the experience of mystics that the full meaning of mysticism is so hard to reach. Actually, in all mysticism there is a fusion of intellect and emotion which defies expression through anything but metaphor and simile.

In no sphere of mental activity is the inadequacy of language as a means of expression more apparent than in mysticism. Various writers have held various ideas of the origin of language in the matter

of significance. Some have stated that common language is a graveyard of dead metaphor and that as a language grows older it strews its progress with metaphors which have become conventionalized and lost their original directness.

A study of language *per se*, however, seems to show that language has its origin in perceptual directness and that as man's mind became more complex in its power to reason and think, perceptual symbols became utterly inadequate to express meaning in themselves. The process of thought is by generalization and association of ideas, by comparing things little known with things which are known and extending the use of simile and metaphor. It is true that as language grows, many of these similes and metaphors fall by the wayside and lose their original perceptual clarity but it is equally true that new and more complicated similes and metaphors take their place as ideas become harder and more difficult to define.

Thus the language of mysticism, which deals with the most subtle and least perceptual subject matter, is necessarily forced to employ an advanced and hypostatized form of imagery not easily intelligible to any but those who have exercised their minds in an endeavour to understand what the ideas are. This process is nowhere more clearly shown than in the writings of Plotinus, the supreme form of the intellectual mystic. Of Plotinus and those like him it has been said, 'They record a sense of the Supreme so vivid and intense, of felt communion so ineffable that it is not the analytical intellect that perceives but the very pulse of the soul that feels the inadequacy of expression whatsoever in human words. Such expression indeed is felt to be so limiting that, instead of quickening, it narrows, stifles and denies the fullness of experience. Unless the mystic speaks in consciously inadequate symbols he finds that every phrase he utters recognizes restrictions and implies limitations which his sense of the infinite has transcended and rejected' (Wicksteed, *From Dante to Aquinas*, pp 39-40). Plotinus is an intellectual mystic. That is to say that God for Plotinus was the pure rational and reasoning faculty from which all contact of personal intimacy was shut out. But the religious mystics who find God to be an intensely personal being, with whom they can have communion or union through human feeling and emotion, are equally aware of the inadequacy of language to express their thought. St John Damascene said, 'It is fitting for us to be aware how impossible it is for us, wrapped up in gross flesh as we are, to understand and express in speech those lofty and immaterial actions of the Godhead unless by availing ourselves of figures and images and signs consonant with our nature'. A modern mystic has said the same thing 'Since we have no direct vision of things divine revelation must be to us of an indirect character. It

must come down to us by analogy, by simile, by type, by parable, by something or other which shall translate the truth into terms within our capacity The mind of man must gradually be led from symbol to reality, from metaphor to mystery '¹

I am not here concerned with whether the mystic attitude is true, in the sense that it may enable man to find truth, or whether it is a huge illusion and aberration I am concerned here merely with the fact that the mystical attitude is a real event in human experience and am now endeavouring only to describe the characteristics of that attitude, so that its expression may be understood Writers like Leslie Stephen, Bertrand Russell, C E M Joad and Julian Huxley do not believe that the mystic has any sure grasp on truth But against these are host of others who find in mysticism the most satisfying experience of which the human mind is capable in its search for reality Psychologically mysticism is a reality capable of explanation whatever its value as a measuring rod of truth may be Mysticism is an excursion into the realm of belief and subject to all the disabilities from which belief itself suffers Belief, as Dr Flint has pointed out, is coextensive with true and erroneous judgement, with real and imagined knowledge 'Belief', he says, 'should be coextensive with knowledge, coincident with truth Actually it is far more extensive than knowledge and coincides largely with error and not with truth' (Flint's *Agnosticism*, p 424)

In her very fully documented book on Mysticism Evelyn Underhill describes four characteristics of the mystic state First, it is active and practical, an organic life process Second, its aims are wholly transcendental and spiritual the heart of the mystic is set upon the changeless One Third, this One is for the mystic not merely the reality of all that is, but a living and personal object of love Fourth, living union with this One—which is the goal of the mystic's adventure—is a definite form of enhanced life requiring an arduous process of remaking the character the progress along the Mystic Way These four characteristics may be taken as a fairly correct description of the mystic state Fundamentally all mystics are at one in this however they may differ from each other in their account of their experience Dean Inge has put the position even more clearly in the well-known terminology of Christian mysticism The mystic loves to figure his path, he says, 'as a ladder reaching from earth to heaven which must be climbed step by step This *scala perfectionis* is generally divided into three stages The first is called the purgative life, the second the illuminative, while the third, which is really the goal rather than a part of the journey, is

¹ Kolbe *The Four Mysteries of Faith*, p 255

called the unitive life, or state of perfect contemplation ' ¹ To trace the various interpretations of this fundamental idea of mysticism through the mystics of the world would be an endless and utterly bewildering task. In the mysticism of Islām, with which I shall deal in the next chapter, we shall see that the fondness of the Arab mind for classification has produced a multitude of intricate patterns of mystic analysis. To examine these in detail is, however, no part of my present purpose. There is always a danger in dealing with mysticism in excessive detail that the study is apt to lose itself in a wilderness of technical terms which, in their variety and nuance of meaning, are even more intractable than the technical terms of philosophy. The Sūfī philosophy, which is one of the most striking ebullitions of the mystic spirit in Islām, is most formidably equipped with technicalities. There are many learned works which deal adequately with this aspect of the matter and few of them are more satisfying to English readers than the learned studies of Professor Nicholson, familiar to all serious students of this difficult subject. I think it will be sufficient for my present object merely to indicate some of the salient features of typical mystical expression so that I may be in a position to illustrate them from the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf in due course.

The mystic is a restless being. He is not satisfied with himself. He seeks for improvement and to obtain this self-improvement he craves for certain things. In the first place there is in him the urge to be a pilgrim or wanderer in search of the lost home, the better country from which he is separated in this poor and inferior mundane world. As the Christian hymn has it

‘ I m but a stranger here
Heaven is my home
Earth is a desert drear
Heaven is my home
Danger and sorrow stand
Round me on every hand
Heaven is my fatherland
Heaven is my home ’

The world and all its earthly show are simply obstacles in the path, curtains that shut off the light, veils which must be pierced. In Persian mysticism this is one of the dominant traits, often ending in a form of pessimism commoner in the East than in the West.

‘ There was a door to which I found no key
There was a veil past which I could not see
Some little talk awhile of Me and Thee
There seemed—and then no more of Thee and Me ’ ²

¹ *Christian Mysticism* pp 9-10

² *Rubāiyāt* Translated by Fitzgerald, XXXII

So sang Omar Khayyām and so sings Shāh Abdul Latif in more than one passage of poetry

In the second place there is the craving of heart for heart, the soul longs to find its perfect mate—it is a lover waiting and hoping and striving for the Beloved. This is the deep seated emotionalism which makes the mystic state so real and fills the lover with the certainty that will eventually bring the ecstasy of fulfilment. Christian and Islāmic mysticism are full of this sentiment. Perhaps the former has the finer expression of religious fervour but the latter has certainly a greater range of sheer beauty and power. It was St Bernard, the author of two of the most sublime mystical hymns in the Christian hymnology, namely 'Jerusalem the Golden with milk and honey blest' and 'For thee, mine own dear country, mine eyes their vigils keep' who, in quite another mystical strain, declared 'Let no one believe that he has received the kiss divine, if he knows the truth without loving it or loves it without understanding it. But blessed is that kiss whereby not only is God recognized but also the Father is loved for there is never full knowledge without perfect love'. Or again, in words which are startling to the more restrained imagery of present-day Christianity, St Bernard said 'Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth. Who is it who speaks these words?' It is the Bride. Who is the Bride? It is the soul thirsting for God. She who asks this is held by the bond of love to him from whom she asks it. If then mutual love is specially befitting to a bride and bridegroom, it is not unfitting that the name of the bride is given to a soul that it loves' (*Cantica Canticorum*, Sermon vii). Compare this devout spiritualizing of a sensuous relation, typical of medieval Christian mysticism, with the treatment of the Beloved in Jāmī

In solitude where Being signless dwelt
And all the Universe still dormant lay
Concealed in selflessness One Being was
Exempt from 'I' or Thou -ness and apart
From all duality Beauty Supreme
Unmanifest except unto Itself
By Its own light, yet fraught with power to charm
The souls of all concealed in the Unseen
An Essence pure unstained by aught of ill
No Mirror to reflect its loveliness
No comb to touch its locks no collyrium
Lent lustre to its eyes no rosy cheeks
Oershadowed by dark curls like hyacinth
No peachlike down was there no dusky mole
Adorned Its face no eye had yet beheld
Its image To Itself it sang of Love
In wordless measures By Itself it cast
The die of Love "

Or contrast these lines of Abu Sayid Ibn Abu'l Khair

' O Thou whose visage makes our world so fair,
Whose union, night and day, is all man's prayer,
Art kinder unto others? Woe is me!
But woe to them if they my anguish share!—

Said I "To whom belongs thy Beauty?" He
Replied "Since I alone exist, to me,
Lover, Beloved and Love am I in one,
Beauty and Mirror and the Eyes which see"¹

In the third place the mystic has a craving for the attainment of perfection of heart. When he is conscious of his deficiencies he is plunged in a slough of despond which is sometimes called The Dark Night of the Soul. When he is conscious of perfect attainment he is suffused with a glow of happiness. To reach this perfection he will undergo cheerfully the rigours of asceticism. When he attains the perfection he seeks he speaks in an exalted and highly emotional strain which rarely fails to impress itself upon his hearers. Thus the grim ascetic and the contented saint are but stages in this quest for the ideal goodness, a quest that in Christian mystics often takes on an ethical character. Allied to this idea of perfection through the self is the idea common to all mystical thought that the self holds the key to the understanding of God. Richard of St Victor said 'If thou wishest to search out the deep things of God, search out the depths of thine own spirit'. God, says the mystic, is closer to us than breathing and nearer than hands and feet. Jāmī says

' Both power and being are denied to us,
The lack of both is what's ordained for us
But since 'tis He who lives within our forms
Both power and action are ascribed to us'²

In the Masnawī Jalāluddīn Rūmī has said

' Strive then from mere hearing to press on to seeing
What ear has told you falsely eye will tell truly
The ear too will acquire the properties of an eye
Your ears now worthless as wool will become gems
Yea! your whole body will become a mirror
It will be as an eye or a bright gem in your bosom
First the hearing of the ear enables you to form ideas
The ideas guide you to the Beloved'³

The consciousness of unworthiness which keeps the soul from attaining its ideal of fulfilment has been beautifully expressed by Isaac Watts

¹ Browne Translated in *Literary History of Persia* Vol II, pp 264-6

² Jāmī, op cit pp 66, 67

³ Jalāluddīn Rūmī, op cit, p 271

' I love the Lord But ah ! how far
My thoughts from the dear object are !
The wanton heart how wide it roves
And fancy meets a thousand loves

If my soul burn to see my God,
I tread the courts of his abode
But troops of rivals throng the place
And tempt me off before his face '

' No poet ', says Professor Shairp, ' has ever made the most of human life who has not regarded it as standing on the threshold of an invisible world, as supported by divine foundations ' ¹ The theology of St Paul is full of this mystical conception The things that are seen are temporal but the things that are not seen are eternal The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is a *locus classicus* of this mystical attitude ' And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith but have not charity ' (that is love) ' I am nothing—For now we see through a glass darkly but then face to face now I know in part but then shall I know as also I am known '

So much for the difficulties that impede the heart in its search for truth The mystical certainty that comes from fulfilment is expressed beautifully in the third chapter of Second Corinthians ' But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory ' In fact in the mystic Vision, which perceives that there is a land of pure delight where saints immortal reign, illumination, knowledge, contentment and ecstasy are fused into a kind of unity which is truly ineffable in that no language is capable of expressing the feelings of the believer This is the ground where the spirit of poetry meets the spirit of religion, where ecstasy touches the chord that responds in the heart of the poet, philosopher and saint alike Something of this ecstasy of illumination can be felt in the lines of Shāh Abdul Latif from the Sur Āsa

' These paltry eyes of mine
Have brought me favour's grace
If evil but before them be
I see love in its place
All day they look and yet
They halt out there to see
They saw and recognized Love
And have returned to me '

¹ Quoted in Inge *Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought*,
p 83

And again in the beautiful Sur Barvo Sindhī occurs this passage

' I swear by the Lord
 The face of Beloved's most lovely of all
 It's the way of the world
 To alter Love's virtue and change it to dross
 No one ever eats
 The flesh of mankind In this world will be left
 Only fragrant delight
 All the rest of mankind wear but friendship's false cloak
 Only one or two are
 Who are one with our heart O Giver, vouchsafe
 That friends present be
 On the tongues of my friends there is mention once more
 That we're reconciled
 My friends have this way that, break I with them,
 They break not with me '

Of the three cravings of the mystic spirit, to be a wanderer, to find consolation in union, heart with heart, and to reach perfection, all may be exemplified in the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf The first is especially clear in the love stories, particularly that of Sasuī and Punhūn, which describes the perils and dangers of the journeying The closely allied idea that journeying physically is itself useless, since the real travelling must be within the wastes of one's own soul, is emphasized time and again A passage in the Sasuī Ābrī exemplifies this

' However far thou journeyest forth,
 Lo ! is thy Friend still at thy door
 Return and ask thyself again
 Thy Friend is on thy very floor
 The loved one that thou sufferest for
 Of very sooth resides in thee
 Why go to Wankar, if not here
 Thou searchest thy Belov'd to see ?
 Go with thine heart towards thy love
 Cease, Sasuī, wanderings of thy feet
 Ask not the sand how lies the path
 To travel soul fully is meet '

The craving of heart for heart, the real human emotional appeal of mysticism, runs through the whole of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry It is beautifully expressed in the Sur Samundī, that allegory of the wandering soul, wherein love is a sailor who sets out to sea and sails to distant lands leaving the lover disconsolate behind The appeal of the following verses is unmistakable

' Surely my melting soul is nought
 For while I stood on the strand,
 Love came himself and the cable sought
 And pushed the boat from the land
 Of sailors I knew no useful lore
 Else had my body's strength,
 While the boat was standing there by the shore
 Been twined in the cable-length

I was standing myself by the very wharf
 When my love let the hawser go
 Within my heart must some weakness be
 Or else my love coming back to me
 Doth wondrous kindness show '

The third craving, for perfection of heart and the perfect joy of attainment, which comes from union with the divine, is also evident in the last passage quoted. In the Sur Āsa the soul confesses its weakness before God

' If Thou but touch this iron " me ", gold I should be by reason
 Thou Giver art of Gifts the rest but wandering beggars are
 There falls in its due season rain but Thou in very season
 Dost shower Thy precious bounty far
 O wouldst Thou to my house but come,
 All wealth I'd have and every sum '

The joy of union is described in the Sur Samundī

' If thou wouldst come to me now, my Love,
 Full joy to my soul I'd impart
 If, Mother, mayhap my lover should come,
 I'd cling to him, cleave to him here in my home
 And speak out the words of my heart '

The mysterious unity of the soul with God is a constantly recurring theme often expressed in language the exact meaning of which is hard to understand. In the Sur Sōrath occur the words

' Man is my secret I am his
 Here lies the key to mysteries
 This phrase the singer took to sing
 The song he sang before the King
 And when he sang, where there were two,
 The pair to single One-ness grew '

The mysticism of the Risālo is Islāmic. The emphasis throughout is guided by the stern monotheism of the Prophet. The banishment of all duality is more important than the attainment of loving perfection in God, which is more the Christian point of view. Thus the gentler idea of the Christian hymn

' God moves in a mysterious way
 His wonders to perform
 He sets his footsteps on the sea
 And rides upon the storm '

is overborne by a harder doctrine of ideal unity. In this strain Shāh Abdul Latīf proclaims his belief

' God who is One no rival hath
 Herein of Him the Oneness is,
 And righteousness of truth But who
 Embraced false Twoness lost indeed
 The savour and the salt of life '

What has been said will show that the mystic vision of Shāh Abdul Latif, while differing in detail from the mystic vision of Christian writers, has affinities which make its appeal wide. In fundamentals his religious mysticism is closely allied to that of Christian mystics. The chief difference lies in the differing content of the idea of God or the divine.

The method of approach to God is much the same in all mysticism, though the language of the mystic experience is, naturally enough, coloured by the religion of the mystic. A rationalist writer like Joad puts his finger on the weakness of the mystical attitude in that it cannot convey its content. 'In affirming', he says, 'that mystical experience is at once exalting and exciting, and that it brings a feeling of emancipation from self, the mystics are unanimous but they have not succeeded in conveying its content. The God of whom they speak may be nothing but a generalized name for the world of value, a symbol to denote the element of perfection and permanence in the universe'.¹ This is a vital point. Possibly it is just this deification of value which enables mystics of diverse kinds to understand each other. The inability to convey content is easily explicable. The cause lies in the fact that mystical belief is an emotional experience and hence wholly individual, and also in the poverty of language to express the meaning of subtle and intensely personal feeling. Though mysticism is emotional, it is not unalloyed emotionalism. The reason is a directing influence, and within its limits, the mystical experience follows certain logical rules. In his deeply thoughtful work on *Christian Mysticism* Dean Inge has emphasized this cardinal fact. 'A revelation', he states, 'absolutely transcending reason is an absurdity no such revelation could ever be made. In the striking phrase of Macarius, "The human mind is the throne of the Godhead"—for reason is still king. Religion must not be a matter of feeling only. Those who blindly follow the inner light find it no "candle of the Lord" but an *ignis fatuus* and all the great mystics are aware of this'.² The precise place of reason in the mystical complex constitutes a problem of analysis that no one has solved adequately and perhaps no one ever will. The ecstasy of the mystic's certainty has qualities in common with the ecstasy of great poetry which, as we have already seen, contains elements of thought, feeling and music. It is unnecessary for us to proceed to the extremes of those thinkers who hold that ecstasy is the substance of poetry. To believe, as Mordell believes, that ecstasy includes 'the scientist's or philosopher's passion for knowledge, the idealist's

¹ Joad *The Present and Future of Religion*, p. 208. See Chapter X, *passim*.

² *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 19, 21.

devotion to a cause, the warrior's madness for battle, the patriot's ardour to die for his country, and man's submission to his God¹ is to widen the meaning of ecstasy till it becomes nearly meaningless

The truth is that in certain situations man reaches a psychological state in which he feels out of himself and one with a greater unity or whole. This is a state of high emotion induced by thought and produced by a vivid conviction. This state is certainly reached by the great poets in their moments of what we call 'inspiration' (a question-begging term) and makes it easy to compare their poetic expression with the description by mystics of the mystic vision. This state of exaltation is called forth by a multiplicity of excitants. Kant and Hegel reach sublimity in contemplation of the universality of mind. Shelley, Keats and Browning are uplifted by the wonder of beauty. Plotinus is enwrapped in a burning conviction of a universal soul. Shakespeare is stimulated to it by the play of human emotions and wills in the life workings of mankind. The mystics reach the plane of inspiration by 'experiencing' a personal contact with the divine. In all the moment of vision has been achieved by a process of thought in which logic is certainly not lacking, whatever the value of the final conclusion may be. To quote Dean Inge once again: 'The phase of thought or feeling which we call mysticism has its origin in that which is the raw material of all religion, and perhaps of all philosophy and art as well, namely the dim consciousness of the beyond, which is part of our nature as human beings. Mysticism arises when we try to bring this higher consciousness into relation with the other contents of our minds'²

Since mystics as a class are all engaged in exploring the same field of experience we need scarcely be surprised that there is much similarity in their expression of that experience. The many facets of God evident in the mystic's vision are markedly common topics of mystical writing. The symbols used are also strangely of a kind. Abu Sayid Abu'l Khair, the famous Sūfī, said: 'The veil between God and his servant is neither earth or heaven, nor the Throne nor the Footstool. thy selfhood and illusions are the veil and when thou removest these thou hast attained unto God'. This is strongly reminiscent of Johannine Christianity. 'The soul', said St Bernard, 'will know therefore that the Lord is nigh when it feels itself burned by this fire and when it can say with the prophet "From above hath He sent fire into my bones and it prevaileth against them"'. 'O Love,' exclaimed St Catherine of Genoa, 'he who feels thee cannot comprehend thee and he who desires to know thee cannot understand thee. O wounded heart, thou art incurable and brought to the

¹ *Literature of Ecstasy*, p. 241

² *Christian Mysticism*, p. 5

point of death I would that I might be able to express it How joyous a thing it were to speak of love if only one could find the words' In words that might have been uttered by some Islāmic mystic Tauler said, 'All things are gathered together in one with the divine sweetness and the man's being is so penetrated with the divine substance that he loses himself therein as a drop of water is lost in a cask of strong wine and thus the man's spirit is so sunk in God in divine union that he loses all sense of distinction and there remains a sweet still union without cloud or colour' Mechthold of Magdeburg said, 'O soul, before the world was, I longed for thee and I still long for thee and thou for me Therefore when our two desires unite Love shall be fulfilled' 'It is necessary', said St John of the Cross, 'to be on fire with love and that with anxiety' We may agree with Miss Underhill that if the great Christian mystics could be all brought together 'the world would soon perceive that they constitute one of the most amazing and profound variations of which the human race has yet been witness'¹ But we need not confine ourselves to the Christian mystics we could include all mystics At the same time we should have to observe that the differences which they would exhibit would be differences of minor detail only and not of fundamentals Mysticism is essentially similar wherever it arises The mystics are engaged in ploughing and reploughing the same small plot of land Even if the ploughmen are differently garbed and handle their ploughs with a variety of techniques we do not see that these circumstances matter very much to the character of the furrows they carve from the selfsame soil

¹ From Evelyn Underhill

CHAPTER VI

INFLUENCES IN ISLĀMIC MYSTICISM

It is no part of the object of this book to trace the development of mysticism, an immense subject on which a vast amount of erudite scholarship has been expended. The poetry of Shāh Abdul Latif is an expression of the later Sūfism in India, especially as influenced by the Muhammadan domination of Upper India from the fifteenth century onwards. Sūfism is merely one of the forms in which mysticism has altered the simple religion of the Prophet. As a system and as a mode of thought it can be clearly distinguished from the many kinds of asceticism and other-worldliness which have emerged in the course of Islāmic history, the latter chiefly in the orders of darwishes, eremites, and fakīrs in a variety too complicated to receive attention here. Thanks to the labours of profound Orientalists, as, for instance, Professor Nicholson, who has given most of his life to a study of the subject, the lines of enquiry into Sūfism are more or less well known to scholars. Nicholson, who speaks with greater authority than almost any other, has declared, 'No single cause will account for a phenomenon so widely spread and so diverse in its manifestation. Sūfism has always been thoroughly eclectic, absorbing and transmuting whatever "broken lights" fell across its path and consequently it gained adherents amongst men of the most opposite views—theists and pantheists, Mu'tazilites and Scholastics, philosophers and divines'.¹ In the same work he has come to the conclusion that the 'four principal foreign sources of Sūfism are undoubtedly Christianity, Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, and Indian asceticism and religious philosophy'.

No more unpromising field for the growth of mystic ideas could be imagined than the stern monotheism of the Korān. But, as Dean Inge has pointed out, mysticism is part of the raw material of every religion. Thus even in the Korān may be found passages that are mystical in meaning² and perhaps set the minds of early Muslims thinking in ways that were unintended by the Prophet. In the fiftieth sūr (15) we find the following: 'We created man and We know what his soul whispereth to him and We are closer to him than his neck-vein'. In the eighth sūr (24) it is said: 'Know that God

¹ *Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 300.

² See Chapter VII of *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islām* for D. B. Macdonald's views on Mysticism in the Korān.

cometh in between a man and his own heart ' A still better known passage, which will recall words in the English prayer book, is in the fifty-eighth sūr (8) ' Three persons speak not privately together but He is their fourth nor five but He is their sixth nor fewer nor more, but wherever they be He is with them ' But the Korān viewed as a whole is completely non-mystical We cannot but agree with Mr North when he says ' No one reading the Korān would lay much stress on such passages unless he were looking for the like of them '¹ If indeed the Korān is responsible for the subsequent development of mysticism in Islām it is largely because its stern rejection of the kind of attitude in which mystics indulge made the intrusion of a more personal emotionalism sooner or later inevitable

The early Sūfis were ascetics much influenced by the practice of Christian hermits, who in their turn were familiar with Neoplatonic ideas There were many of these ascetics in Arabia before the days of Muhammad After the establishment of Islām they carried their ideas on The early Sūfis were all ascetic and quietist Their point of view was a sort of protest against the formalism of the new religion which placed great emphasis on external duties and enforced, with strict insistence, a rigid belief Mysticism appeals to the mind that declines to be trammelled in any such narrow way It seeks always to find a personal method of self-expression, to emphasize the personal, as apart from the impersonal element in religious practice Speaking of the first Sūfis, Browne remarks ' This ascetic Sūfism is regarded by von Kremer as the early Arabian type, which if influenced at all from without, was influenced rather by Christian monasticism than by Persian, Greek or Indian ideas '² The conceptions of illumination, gnosis and ecstasy which later come to play so important a part in Sūfī expression are all Neoplatonic in origin They are themselves derived ultimately from the later Greek philosophy which had set its mark so deeply on the Christianity of the first four centuries after the death of Christ There is therefore nothing fanciful in tracing throughout Sūfism the development of ideas which have directed the progress of Christian thought Dean Inge in a masterly book³ has shown how persistent throughout Christian literature has been the continuance of this Platonic and Neoplatonic tradition The characteristic features of the later Sūfism in Oriental literature largely result from the manner in which the Persian mind took up and interpreted this strain of thought

The vital change occurred when the centre of the Islāmic world was shifted from Damascus to Baghdād By this change Arab

¹ *Outline of Islām*, p 106

² See also O'Leary *Arabic Thought and its Place in History*, chapter VII

³ *Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought*

influences became subordinated to Persian 'The Abbāsids', says Bowen, 'came to power as the champions not only of the zealots, but also of the oppressed foreigners. They found their greatest support in the Persians—the revolution was above all a triumph of the Persians over the Arabs. From its beginnings the Abbāsīd court was Persian in character—its manners, its ceremonies, the buildings in which it was housed were all Persian. The Caliph lost more and more the character of an Arab chieftain—a first among equals—and as he retired behind his factotum, the Vizier, took on more and more that of an inaccessible Chosroes'.¹

On the soil of Persia at this time Buddhist and Vedānta ideas flourished in some fashion. Thus were passed into Sūfī thought some of those beliefs and modes of expression which are characteristic of Hindu India. The result of this mixing and fusion of ideas in the Abbāsīd age quickly brought about a state of affairs that had been foreseen by Muhammad himself when he predicted that Muslims would split up into a large number of sects. The result was in fact two-fold. In the first place the ascetic and quietist character of the early Sūfis began to give place to a pantheistic tendency often expressed in sensuous and imaginative language which was utterly alien to the hard austerity of the Korān and the Traditions. In the second place the attack of heterodoxy on orthodoxy, in a land where the orthodox religion was itself alien, produced inevitably the labours of the scholastics culminating in the supreme achievement of Ghazzālī. Ghazzālī's genius succeeded in reconciling the claims of the rigid belief of Arabia with the luxuriant free-thinking of the non-Arab peoples, who by this time held the political power of Islām. Into the process of this transition we have no need to enter. The subject has been dealt with exhaustively in the works of Professor Nicholson. The vital point for my present purpose is that one of the achievements of Ghazzālī was to give Sūfism a firm and assured position within the church of Islām. This result was of course achieved through a system of interpretation of Sūfī utterances by which it was shown that, however much the words of the Sūfis might differ from the words of Muhammad, there was a deep resemblance in their real and ultimate meaning. In this way the Sūfis, who began as ascetics and quietists and later became heterodox theosophists at variance with the established dogma of their time, ended as orthodox Muslims teaching a deeper and subtler meaning in the words of the Korān and using sensuous and emotional imagery quite at variance with the austerity of Muhammad. Sūfism had in fact become swallowed up in the Islāmic church, and, within Islām, made itself into a religious system of its own. It became both a school of

¹ *The Life and Times of Alī b r Īsā*, p. 17

thought and a system of practice and belief. It produced its orders of adherents, its darwīshes and its saints, and showed all the outward signs of an institution of fixed character. In this strange way were the conflicting ideas of the Arabs and the Persians reconciled. In this strange way also from the religious experience of India there came into Islām elements quite alien to it. But this very mixing of opposites enabled mysticism in Islām to retain the appeal it has today amongst people brought up in an utterly different religious tradition. So the poetry of the great mystic poets, like Jalāluddīn Rūmī, Jāmī, Farīduddīn Attār, Bāyazīd and Abu Sayīd Abu'l Khair and many others, can be read, understood and enjoyed by peoples to whom the utterances of the Prophet make no appeal whatever.

Sūfī thought is in fact a wonderful example of the fusion of diverse elements, the stern monotheism of Islām with the pantheistic love of beauty characteristic of the Persian mind. Other-worldliness was in fact reconciled with the human love for beauty and the need for free personal self-expression in religious emotion. It is the intellectual mysticism in Sūfī thought that allies it with the mysticism of Christianity largely derived from Greek philosophy. It is the beauty mysticism, with its emphasis on self-abandonment in the divine and the sinking of individuality in the One, which allies it with the doctrines of Buddhist and Vedantic ideas so powerful in the religion of the Hindu peoples of India. Professor Nicholson believes that Sūfism in its ascetic, moral and devotional aspects was a spiritualized Islām but it continued to do lip-service to the established religion. Thus Allāh, the God of Mercy and Wrath, was in a certain sense depersonalized and worshipped as the One Absolutely Real (Al-Haqq).

No one who wishes to understand Sūfism can escape the long task of studying both Islāmic thought and Islāmic history from the beginning. Professor Nicholson in his 'History of Arabic Literature' has indicated the main lines of this study. He distinguishes a period of rationalism and free thought in the Abbāsīd age from the period of orthodox reaction which commenced from A D 847. During the first period there were the dogmatic battles with the Mu'tazilites and the Zindīqs which led the way to the final reconciliation of tradition and reason by Ghazzālī in the second half of the eleventh century. During this period Sūfism underwent many changes and suffered the intrusion of some non-Islāmic constituents. Prominent names during this period of making were Marūf al Karkhī (died A D 815), Abu Sulaymān (died A D 830), Dhu'l Nūn al Mīsrī (died A D 860). During this period, says Nicholson, 'the stream of Hellenic culture flowed unceasingly into the Moslem world. Innumerable

works of Greek philosophers, physicians, and scientists were translated and eagerly studied. Thus the Greeks became the teachers of the Arabs.¹ In Irāq, Syria and Egypt there was a plentiful harvest of ideas—Neoplatonic, Gnostical, Christian, mystical, pantheistic. In Mesopotamia were people who called themselves Sabians. The greater number of them followed a mode of thought that is like the Neoplatonism of Proclus and Iamblichus. 'There may be', says Nicholson, 'Indian elements in Neoplatonism and Gnosticism, but the immediate source of the Sūfī theosophy is to be sought in Greek and Syrian speculation.'²

According to Merx the real mystical origin is traceable to Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite, identified with the Syrian mystic Stephen Bār Sudaulī, who flourished about A D 500. The writings of the pseudo-Dionysius consisted of four treatises, two of which, one 'On Mystical Theology', and another 'On the Names of God' were of immense importance in the development of Christian mystical speculation. O'Leary in his work on 'Arabic thought and its Place in History' says that this Bār Sudaulī was the abbot of a convent at Edessa and that his works, which may be referred to the latter part of the fifth century A D, were translated into Syriac soon after their first appearance in Greek, and must, owing to their being familiar to the Syriac Christians, have become indirectly known to the Muslims. O'Leary has made very clear the debt which the Muslims owed to their subject peoples. Most of the learned works of this time were written in Arabic. But they were not the works of Arabs, who had by then lost the hegemony that was theirs under the Ummāyids. Of influences bearing directly on the trend of Sūfī speculation must be mentioned the ascetic tone of the Manichaeans and Maskdelites, the gnosticism of the Sanīya of the fen country between Wāsīt and Basra, and Buddhist traces in Eastern Persia and Transoxiāna due to the fact that Buddhist monasteries had existed in Balkh. Junayd of Baghdād (died 297 of the Muhammadan era) systematized the teachings of Dhu'l Nūn Misrī and emphasized the doctrine of tauhīd, the union of the soul with God, which became so prominent a feature of Sūfī thought. This doctrine has clear affinities with Neoplatonism, but ascribes to piety and devotion what is ascribed by Neoplatonism to the intuitive faculty as the means whereby the soul achieves union with the divine. O'Leary finds in the tauhīd of the earlier Sūfis and the 'hulūl' of Al Hallāj a fusion of the old pre-Islāmic Persian beliefs with the Neoplatonic conception of the rational element or soul 'as an emanation from the Agent Intellect to which it will ultimately return

¹ R. A. Nicholson *Literary History of the Arabs*, chapter VIII, p. 388

² *ibid* p. 389

and with which it will be united' 'This', says O'Leary, 'is an extremely interesting illustration of the fusion of oriental and Hellenistic elements in Sūfism and shows that the theoretical doctrines of Sūfism, whatever they may have borrowed from Persia and India, receive their interpretative hypostasis from neo-Platonism'¹

Evelyn Underhill holds that Neoplatonism taught the illusory nature of all temporal things and in the violence of its idealism outdid its master Plato. It spoke of the existence of an Absolute God, the Unconditioned One, accessible in ecstasy and contemplation, and thus made a direct appeal to the mystical elements in man. The pseudo-Dionysius, carrying on the Neoplatonic idea of the transcendence of God, proceeded in the treatise on the Divine Names to find God to be Goodness, Unity, Light, Beauty in respect of His transcendence but in respect of His distinction from the finite world to be also Non-Being, Obscure and Ineffable. (See Wulf *History of Medieval Philosophy*, Vol I, pp 83-4) Something of this puzzlement between the knowable and the unknowable of the Divine Nature runs all through the philosophy of the Sūfis and is the occasion for some of the most obscure utterances in their writings. It is as if the human mind were unable to take a firm stand on which viewpoint to adopt, whether that God is Incomprehensible or is so All-Comprehending that everything has meaning only in Him. This bewilderment is characteristic of Neoplatonism and is common in most of the great mystics. Thus Catherine of Siena says (*S Catharinae Senensis Legenda*, II, 190), 'To explain in our defective language what I saw would seem to me like blaspheming the Lord, or dishonouring Him by my speech. so great is the distance between the intellect, when rapt and illumined and strengthened by God, and what can be expressed by words, that they seem almost contradictory.'

When Sūfism became a system and ceased to be the scattered emotional outpourings of individual mystics who found the rigid monotheism of Islām cramping and unsatisfactory, its beliefs began to be collated and defined. One important work which served this purpose was *The Doctrine of the Sūfis*² of Abu Bakr al-Kalabādhī who died in A D 995. The object of this author was to demonstrate the essential orthodoxy of the heterodox and rebellious spirits. Amongst the main beliefs attributed to Sūfī thinkers as a whole by this learned man were the following. First, as to the characteristics of God, the Sūfis were agreed that God is One, Alone, Single, Eternal, Everlasting, Knowing, Powerful, Living, Hearing, Seeing, Strong, Mighty, Majestic, Great, Generous, Clement, Proud, Awful, Enduring,

¹ O Leary op cit, pp 184-94

² *Kitāb-al-Taarūf li Madhṭab ahl-al-tasawwuf* Translated by A J Arberry

First, God, Lord, Ruler, Master, Merciful, Compassionate, Desirous, Speaking, Creating and Sustaining Second, in the doctrine of the Gnosis of God, the Sūfis held that the only guide to God was God Himself and that the part to be played by human intelligence is that of an intelligent person in need of a guide Third, in the doctrine of Spirit, the Sūfis believed that the spirit is an object through which the body lives, a light fragrant breath (rūh) through which life subsists, while the soul (nafs) is a hot wind (rīh) through which the motions and desires exist Fourth, in the doctrine of Union, the Sūfis held that union implied being inwardly separated from all but God, seeing inwardly—in the sense of veneration of none but God Fifth, in the Doctrine of Love, the Sūfis asserted the utter difference between human love and the love of man for God the first was a pleasure, the second an annihilation, in which astonishment, surrender and bewilderment play an important part To Rābia the woman mystic is attributed the saying

' 'Tis purest love when Thou dost raise
The veil to my adoring gaze '

Thus love for the Sūfis is illumination, a piercing of the veil of illusory and temporary things Sixth, in the Doctrine of Separation the Sūfis found a deeply ethical and purifying content separating the mystic from carnal longings and from the desire for pleasant and pleasurable things Seventh, in the Doctrine of Revelation and Veiling, the Sūfis believed with Sahl that ' Revelation is three states revelation of an essence which is unveiling revelation of the qualities of essence which is illumination revelation of the condition of essence which is life of the world to come ' Lastly in the Doctrine of the Seeker and the Sought, the Sūfis identified the Seeker with the Sought 'for the man who seeks God only seeks Him because God first sought him '

All these ideas will be found in the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latif who represents an Indian Muslim development of the philosophy of Jalāluddīn Rūmī In his characteristic way the Sindhī poet uses simple folk stories to teach great lessons Thus in the Sur Mārui, which deals merely with the abduction from her lover of a Sindhī girl by a man for whom she felt no love, the poem opens with the subtlest and deepest metaphysics of which Sūfism is capable The imprisoned Mārui, shut up in the upper rooms from which she can make no escape, exclaims

When there fell on mine ears the Word
" Am I not then your Lord ? "¹
And with ' Yes ' my heart gave assent
It was then that my promise I made
With the folk in the hedges pent

¹ From the Korān Rodwell's Translation Edition Everyman p 310

'Twas my fate to be prisoned It falls !
 How else could one enter these walls ?
 They were shown me by writ of the Stone
 My life, body, life have no joy
 If I be from the goatherd alone

O Lord ! by thy will this decree
 With her Mārūs that Mārūī be
 Life engaoled was the fate that I took,
 That I should live miserable here
 " Body here, soul with Thee ", saith the Book '

To find an exact parallel to this we have to refer only to Whinfield's introduction to *The Spiritual Couplets of Maulāna Jalāhuddīn Muḥammad-i-Rūmī*,¹ where he says, 'Sūfīs who all accept Islām as a divinely established religion suppose that long before the creation of the world a contract was made by the Supreme Soul with the assembled world of spirits who are parts of it. Each spirit was addressed separately thus " Art thou not with Thy Lord ? " that is, bound to him by solemn contract. To this they all answered with one voice " Yes ! "'

The two great characteristics of Sūfī thought, namely a belief in the unity, through effort, of the human soul with God, and the transitoriness of temporal things, which are a veil hiding the true nature of illumination from the comprehension of man, are evident in all Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry. Like the great poets of Persia he employs a variety of images to bring out this essential lesson. Prominent is the distinction between the true love (ishk hakkikī) and the false love (ishk majāzī), between the true wine and the false wine.

Set no love's store against the wine
 Nor count wine dear at such appraise
 Prepare that head for cutting, thine
 The wineshop is the place for them
 Who by the wine-jars end their days

Who dull existence would conserve ?
 For no such aim the lover strives
 One breath from the Beloved's lips
 Is better than a thousand lives
 And can this skin and bone of mine
 Compare with the Beloved's wine ?

Wine in this sense is what uplifts and exhilarates the spirit in its search for God. The intoxicated ones are those overcome with the glorious delirium of divine illumination. Sometimes it is a realization of God's love, sometimes it is the act of loving God. The Vintner is God who vouchsafes a sip of the wine that brings a true realization of Him. Here enters the idea that there is danger and

¹ *The Masnawī-i-Manavī* Translated by Whinfield Introduction, pp. xxii-xxvii

difficulty in the process the soul meets with peril and must be prepared to lose itself and disappear. The love itself is a poison that can ruin and destroy. In a passage which fuses together a number of Sūfī images Shāh Abdul Latīf draws the distinction between the false and the true wine, the danger of the draught, the knife of the vintner who slays, and the fulfilment that comes with final extinction.

' Why for such drink do yearners ask
If back they flee to save their lives
Whene'er the vintners draw their knives '
But they whose heads are given for wine
May sip the wine within the cask '

One of the commonest figures of speech throughout the *Risālo* is that of separation from the Beloved, the state in which the soul is apart from God and has failed to achieve union with Him. According to the Sūfīs, before the human soul is embodied in a human body it lives in the *ālam-i itlāk*, where it is regarded as loose from the body. This is for the Sūfī non-existence, because it is existence apart from God. When God places the soul in the human body it lives in the *ālam-i takayyūd* or binding world, in which state it is bound to the body and held to be in prison. The soul is then separated from God. It is separate from the Beloved and regarded as a stranger wandering from its true home. For the Sūfī in this frame of mind the words of the Christian hymn are literally true.

' For ever with the Lord !
Amen So let it be
Life from the dead is in that word
'Tis immortality
Here, in the body pent,
Absent from him I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home '

There is hardly a poem in the *Risālo* that does not preach this doctrine in striking and beautiful language. In fact the general text of the poems might be taken from the couplet in the *Sur Kalyān*

' The seas of separation roll
And drown each single separate soul

Here the emphasis is on the word 'separate'. Another of the commonest forms of expression in Sūfī thought is that of the path or way, the progress towards mystical fulfilment. The stages on this progress are very differently described by different writers. But speaking generally we say that there are four, *nasut* or humanity, where there is obedience to the tenets of orthodox religion, *tarikat*, or the way in which the forms of religion give place

to spiritual adoration aruf or knowledge, where inspiration begins to take the place of plain belief and hakikat or truth, where the Sūfī attains union with the divine. The soul of man is a searcher upon the path. As Sell points out, the great object of life being to escape from the hindrances to pure love and to return to the divine essence, the Tālib, or seeker, attaches himself to a murshid or teacher and becomes a Sālik, or traveller, passing through periods of service, love, seclusion, knowledge, ecstasy, to truth, union with God (wasl) and fanā (extinction of individuality in the divine) ¹ The Sūfī philosophy thus demands a strict self-discipline with renunciation of selfish feelings and a curbing of evil passions. It is based on a deep ethical system and lays stress upon purity of heart. The self, during the stage of purification, is thus a danger and an obstacle. It misleads the seeker and interposes between him and the Sought. A veil that is hard to pierce. The poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf abounds in allusions to this scheme of belief. Although the self is a kind of will-of-the-wisp it is also, since it comes from God and seeks to return to God, one of the chief means of reaching illumination and seeing the Vision of truth, beauty and goodness.

As has been made manifest already, Shāh Abdul Latīf is primarily a poet and not a philosopher. We look, therefore, in vain for any long passages of Sūfī metaphysics in his verses. There are, however, occasional glimpses of the philosophy of the Sūfī system. In the *Sur Mazūrī* the poet hints at the permanence of the human soul which is not interrupted by the passing accidents of birth and death.

‘By dying live that thou may’st feel
The Beauty of Beloved. Thou
Wilt surely do the righteous thing
If thou wilt follow this advice
They who so died before their death
By death were not in death subdued
Assuredly they live who lived
Before their life of living was
Who lived before their living was
From age to age will live for aye
They will not die again who died
Before the dying came to them’

The play of meaning on life and death in this passage is very puzzling. But the significance lies probably in the Sūfī doctrine that the soul of man differs infinitely in kind but not at all in degree from the Divine Spirit ‘whereof it is a particle and wherein it will ultimately be absorbed’. Allied to this metaphysic there appears also to be some suggestion of the Christian belief prominent in the New Testament of man dying to eternal life in the perfect love of God.

The technical terms of the Sūfī epistemology are not frequent in

¹ *The Faith of Islām* pp 92-4

Shāh Abdul Latīf But they are not entirely absent In the Sur
Suhīnī we find

' Learn well the lesson, Suhīnī, of the hidden law
How by the Mystic Way the Truth of Justice speeds
True knowledge is in sooth the joy to them who love '

In the Sur Kōhīārī there is a play of meaning on the word ' Lāhut ' which in its mystic sense is one of the stages on the path towards fulfilment—non-existence—and in its plain sense is the name of a village believed to have been in the Mēkrān country near Sindh The holy mendicants pass on their way to Lāhut over the waste of sand

' For they that certain knowledge won
Where stands on barren hill the town
Behind them empty thoughts they put
To make them townsmen of Lāhut '

Much greater than on any other of the metaphysical doctrines of the Sūfis in the Rīsālo is the emphasis put upon the place of Self both as a distraction and obstacle and as a sure means of illumination In the Sur Rāmkalī Shāh Abdul Latīf says

' If thou dost think " I will a Jogī be "
Drain cup of nothingness and sitting gaze
On Nothingness itself lay hold of it
(Where there is ' I ' that nothingness displays)
O Seeker, full thy joy of pasture be
With God, One, Perfect One '

In the same poem he says

' Selfness destroy and from the self
Lay self aside No life hath " This,"
No life at all They're fools
Whose " I " in talking is '

This is the same idea as is found in the Masnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī

' Thou hast made these " Us " and " Me " for this purpose
To wit, to play chess with them by Thyself
When Thou shalt become one entity with " Us " and " You "
Then thou wilt show true affection for these lovers
When these " We " and " Ye " shall all become one Soul,
Then they will be lost and absorbed in the ' Beloved ' "

The other idea of the self is developed in the Sur Sasuī Ābrī in the Rīsālo

" Thy love is in thy lap " then why from travellers
dost thou make thy quest ?
' Thy love's within thee ! See st thou not ? " This
saying ponder well and know
' Thy love is in thy lap ' Why askest thou like
this for sign of him ?
' Nearer than vein of neck is he " Thine own is
with thy very self

The same idea is found in the same poem

' The loved one that thou sufferest for
Of very sooth resides in thee
Why go to Wankar, if not here
Thou searchest thy beloved to see ? '

Another common idea in Sūfism is the need for rending the veil of the temporary and ephemeral. This is the spirit which moves Jāmī to exclaim ' Remove from our eyes the veil of ignorance and show us things as they really are. Show not to us non-existence and existence nor cast the veil of non-existence over the beauty of existence. Make this phenomenal world the mirror to reflect the manifestations of thy beauty and not a veil to separate and repel us from Thee '¹

This idea occurs again and again in the *Risālo*. The wayward and the froward heart is one of the chief obstacles to the rending of the veil that hides God from man. The froward heart is likened to a camel which will not behave reasonably but insists on having its own stupid way. In a passage from the *Masnawī* which combines several favourite symbols together Jalāluddīn says

' The wine is from that world, the vessels from this
The vessels are seen but the wine is hidden !
Hidden indeed from the sight of the camel,
But open and manifest to the spiritual
O God, our eyes are blinded '²

Exactly in this strain is one of the finest poems in Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry in which the simile of the camel is developed in a very moving manner

' The stupid brute I tell and tell
That in the milkbush there's no zest
Yon poison bush is many's knell
But hath his silly head obsessed
Around in plenty for his need
Is ripened scrub of sandalwood
The sulky grumbler pays no heed
And makes me weep my tears in blood '

These examples will serve to show how Shāh Abdul Latīf is in the authentic line of Sūfī poets. Writing of the Persian Sūfī poets Nicholson has said, ' The real basis of their poetry is a loftily inculcated ethical system which recognizes in purity of heart, self-renunciation and bridling of the passions, the necessary conditions of eternal happiness. Attached to this we find a pantheistic theory of the emanation of all things from God and their ultimate union with

¹ *Selections from the Lawāih* Translated by Hadland Davies, p. 55

² *The Masnawī* Translated by Whinfield, p. 262

him¹ All these traits are evident in the Sindhi poet More than one example has been given of the resemblance of his thought and expression to that of Jalāluddīn Rūmī and Jāmī Occasionally he preaches a severe ethical righteousness that is strictly on the lines of orthodox Islāmic didacticism

' Be patient, bow thy head and see
Lo! Anger is a mighty woe
In patience there abideth joy
O honest sir, this surely know
Be patient Patient folks prevail
The stiff-necked are in sorry plight
The palate of all hasty men
Hath never savoured patience right
He eats the bread of punishment
Whose early anger breaketh forth
The man of malice holds his robe
And finds within it nought of worth '

The complex history of Sūfism can therefore be read in every page of the Risālo Here there is an echo of Plotinus and Hellenism there of Alexandrine Christianity with a hint now and then of something that springs from the Buddhism and Vedānta doctrines of India It would be a great mistake however to assume that the religion of the poet is anything but that of Islām Strange is it that the mysticism of Christianity is not alien to the spirit of the Sindhi poet For in the beautiful poem of Clough 'The Hidden Love' is something very much akin to the emotional and religious attitude which characterizes the work of Shāh Abdul Latif

' O let me love my love unto myself alone
And know my knowledge to the world unknown
No witness to my vision call,
Beholding, unbeheld of all
And worship Thee, with Thee, withdrawn apart,
Who e'er, what e'er Thou art,
Within the closest veil of mine own inward heart '

No one can exhaust by description the many facets of Sūfism Like a Persian carpet or the sea over which the soft breeze plays it takes its colour from the light that falls upon it From so many angles can the eye behold it that there is no end to the variety of its appearances All that can be done is to trace some of its main ideas and show how they are expressed with emphasis now on this aspect now on that of the simple emotional longing of man for what he regards as the divine Now it is beauty, now it is self-renunciation, now it is the hopelessness of the ideal and the unworthiness of man which absorbs the whole thought of the mystic

Who shall summarize the changing forms of such an attitude ?

¹ *Selected Poems from the Durr-i-Shamsi Tabriz* Introduction, p. xxvi

Historically we may trace as far as we can the origin of some of these ideas. Philosophically we may analyse the depth of the thought or the worth of the metaphysic. Aesthetically we may describe the effect upon the introspective mind of him who listens to the poetry in which Sūfism is declared. But beyond that we cannot go. Thus fully conscious of the limitations upon me by the very nature of the subject matter I have had to be content with illustrations of the Sūfī mood in the Sindhī poet and allow the reader to find out for himself from the verses what other meaning and what other aspect of truth and beauty they may convey. The similarity of Shāh Abdul Latif's attitude to that of the great Persian Sūfī poets, and especially Jalāluddīn Rūmī and Jāmī I have mentioned more than once. Indeed it would be possible to fill a whole volume detailing the resemblances. But to do this would not only weary the reader but would also destroy some of the pleasure that all good poetry brings, the joy of finding out the many-sidedness of its beauty for oneself. I prefer, therefore, to end on the serious note of Sūfism, the great harmony it makes with the deepest feelings of the true believer in religion, submissive and humble before the wonder of something that far surpasses the individual imagining of one finite mind. This is the prevalent note of Islāmic mysticism. Whether, as Macdonald thinks, the main influence comes from the religion of Muhammad himself, or whether it has been wrought to final perfection by the peculiar bent of the Persian mind working on that Islāmic material matters not. After all the achievement is there for us to make of it what we will. There is a province where poetry, religion and philosophy all meet on common ground. Sūfism has certainly found the path to that fusion of the deepest thoughts of which the introspective mind of man is capable. All are melted together in a universal comprehension where the accidents of life and death make no difference to understanding.

' Love of my life ! the patient dead will throng
 About us as we step on that grey sand
 Singing and hear all heaven in the song
 And doubt and see our eyes, and understand '¹

This may be all delusion and word-weaving. But if it is merely delusion, the delusion is a very pleasant one, shared by many, like Shāh Abdul Latif, whose verses will continue to delight mankind.

¹ Humbert Wolfe

CHAPTER VII

TASAWWUF BY THE LOWER INDUS

THE practice of Sūfism by the common people in Sind was a very different thing from the refined system of the poets and theologians. The changes which Sūfism underwent in the course of its history have already been indicated. It is not possible to trace in any detail the progress of tasawwuf in Sind. When Sūfism became a system of practice it became associated with the rise of various orders of darwishes and mendicants. In the *Tārīkh-i-Tāhīrī* it is stated ' Besides the shrine of the Shaikh of Shaikhs, Shaikh Pattā, there are (i.e. in Tatta) some ten or twelve other places where darwishes perform their dance. These excitable men often work themselves into such a state of holy ecstasy that they cast themselves on the rocks of the mountain of Makalī but by the blessing of their learned doctors and teachers no harm befalls them. This custom, however much opposed to the laws of Islām, has been transmitted from generation to generation and all attempts of wise teachers and just governors have never succeeded in putting a stop to it ' ¹ Popular Sūfism in fact degenerated into something that the mullas viewed with distaste.

There is no reliable account of the progress of the movement in Sind. The *Tuhfat-al-Kirām*, which is a treasure house of curious information of a non-scientific character, was written by a man who is described by Elliot as ' very credulous in recording the miracles of saints so numerous that there is scarcely a village in that priest-ridden country which has not its tombs of holy men whose lives and powers are here recorded with implicit faith ' ² But this kind of information is useless. Nor is any of the modern day Sindhi work on this subject in better case because it is founded on the material of the *Tuhfat-al-Kirām* and other works of similar quality. A few of the Sind Sūfis stand out as famous saints and men of some learning. But the rest of them must be taken on trust. That there were a number of cultured and thinking men imbued with the higher tenets of Sūfī philosophy is open to no doubt. But we have very little information about them. The best-known early one was Sayid Usman Shāh Marwandī who became famous as Lāl Shāhbāz with a popular shrine at Sehwan. He was the author of a number of works used for the instruction of youth in a later age, as noted by Burton

¹ *Tārīkh-i-Tāhīrī* Elliot 1, pp 272-4 ² Elliot 1, op cit

Jēthmal Parsrām has given some account of him and his companions in his book on Sind and its Sūfīs but the facts are meagre. He was a Kalandar and attained a great reputation for sanctity in his lifetime and after his death. The gathering at his tomb on his saint-day produced and still produces strange sights. Religion and superstition are mingled and Hindus and Muslims assemble together to do honour to his memory. Jēthmal Parsrām remarks, 'In Sehwan where Lāl Shāhbāz (also called Kalandar Lāl Marwānī) lived and died you find during the annual fair thousands of Hindus and Muhammadans camped round the tomb moving freely and singing the Sūfī songs that ever melt the heart. Wrong things have also entered into the celebration of these holy days, but that is what always happens.' Of the Sūfī poets of Sind about whom an immense modern literature is now poured forth, none are superior to Shāh Abdul Latif and most, if not all of them are later in date. Between the thirteenth century when Lāl Shāhbāz flourished and the eighteenth century when Shāh Abdul Latif lived there is very little that can be said to be securely established in the way of verified historical fact. Sachal Sarmast (*The Intoxicated*) is the best of these poets and he appears to have been born some time between 1739 and 1757 and is alleged as a boy to have met Shāh Abdul Latif.

For our knowledge of tasawwuf in Sind we are indebted to Burton. 'Tasawwuf', says Burton, 'under the native governments was as formidable a political engine as most of the secret confraternities recorded in history'. Even among the mild Sindhis a noted Pīr (religious superior) formerly might safely order one of his Murīds or disciples to murder an enemy. Yet the native princes encouraged it partly from superstition and partly because the price of every Pīr was well known to them' (*History of Sind*, pp. 203-4). The Pīrs held positions of great personal authority. The Sūfī fakīrs of Sind belonged to the two great orders of Jelālī and Jemālī darwīshes. They underwent courses of initiation which followed more or less the discipline of the Muslim darwīshes about whom much recondite information can be gleaned from Brown's great work on 'The Dervishes'. The Jelālī fakīrs of Sind wore a felt hat like a fool's cap called 'taj', a coat of black wool with white threads like a shroud without sleeves called 'kafnī' and a blanket of wool called 'gōdrī'. Such persons were in reality professional beggars and part of their stock-in-trade consisted of a 'tasbīh' or rosary, an 'asī' or staff of ebony or blackwood, a 'berāgan' or forked stick used to support the forehead for meditation or repose, 'dhāga' or a girdle of black twisted wool, 'gano' or black wool mixed with red strands used as a necklace, a 'gābrī' or wallet to

contain food and necessities, and a 'tumbī' or beggar's gourd used for collecting alms and as a drinking vessel. The Sind Jemālī fakīrs belonged to four orders, the Kādīrī, the Nakshbandī, the Suhrawardī and the Chishtī. The shughls and huzūrs of some of these orders are described by Burton. Much curious information about these religious exercises has been given by him. (See *History of Sindh*, pp 213-22.) The discipline does not differ greatly in detail from the common run of ascetic practices elsewhere in Islām, and is interesting chiefly as throwing a sidelight upon human psychology. It is hard to see what religious merit can have resulted from many of these practices. Some of the saintliest Sind pīrs seem to have had the same idea of them. Pīr Murād who is reputed to have said that 'it is better to restore one dead heart to eternal life than life to a thousand dead bodies' would appear to have believed that faith is a more reliable weapon than works, an article of belief that Islām shares with Christianity.

Some idea of the sanctity attaching to persons of the religious mendicant class may be gathered from the poem of Shāh Abdul Latīf called Rāmkalī and translated by me under the title 'The Holy Men'. That poem, while ostensibly referring to Hindu Jōgīs, Bairāgīs, Adēsīs and other religious beggars, is much wider in its appeal, as is apparent from the passages that can refer only to a belief in Islām. It was typical of Shāh Abdul Latīf's eclecticism that he should lump all religious mendicants together in this way. But his puritanical religion is brought out clearly in the scathing passages in which he refers to false practices, and to lapses from the stern rigour of asceticism.

' But of the Lord alone true worship is
There s none of pīr or prophet. They do sin
Who worship pīrs and worse than these are they
Who worship idols, those poor luckless folk
From path misled who grasped untruthfulness
Self worship not, thou faithful, pure of heart
They, who do this, believe not, let disgrace
Their faces blacken

It would, however, be absurd to believe that the common man applied these severe standards of righteousness to the Kalandars and so-called Sūfī beggars who wandered far and wide over Sind taking their toll of the superstitious country people. Nothing is more certain than that the criticisms of this system passed by Burnes and Burton are more than deserved. Nor would it be fair to judge tasawwuf in Sind by the standards of the lowest pretenders to it. It is not fair to value Sūfism by its aberrations. It should be judged by its successes and not by what ignorant persons interpret its ideals to be.

Writers like Macdonald hold that the practices of the mendicant orders, whatever the ultimate backslidings to which they descended, have a solid foundation in the sayings and injunctions of the Prophet. He finds in the Korān several indications of the ideals of these mendicant orders. 'There is a phrase', he says, 'which evidently had caught the imagination of Muhammad and to which he returns again and again. It is that of "The Face of Allāh"'. He uses it quite differently from the other anthropomorphisms in the Qurān

and later Islām has taken it and developed it and found in it truth all the mysteries of the emotional life in it given indirectly with it'. Macdonald quotes from the Korān these passages: 'Men act out of desire for the Face of Allāh', they 'desire the Face of Allāh', they act 'for the sake of the Face of Allāh', and 'Everything goes to destruction—is going to destruction—except His Face'.¹ From such passages as these Macdonald infers that 'something more lies in these phrases than the essence of Allāh'. There is in fact a deep mystical consciousness not dissociated from the idea of direct communion with God through a kind of untaught inspiration.

Another great influence in the development of mystical practice came from the 'remembering of God' (zikr), the great source of devotional exercise which was carried to extremes by the darwish orders. In fact in its more violent forms this practice of zikr developed into a species of autohypnotism used to produce the holy trance or ecstasy so prominent in the discipline of the mendicant orders. It was precisely this form of emotional excitement which made the strongest appeal to the common man and convinced him of the divine inspiration and saintliness of the holy mendicant. Lastly there were the company of the saints, the 'friends of Allāh'. 'There is no fear upon them, nor do they grieve'. Amongst the chief of these is Al-Khadr, who drank the waters of immortality. In Sind under the name of Khwājo Khizr this saint has always exercised a great power and has in popular superstition become somehow identified with the spirit of the waters and, by an easy transference of thought, with the deity of the river Indus. In Balūch poetry the Khwājo is identified with the Indus and is represented as an old man dressed in green. 'The Mazārīs untied a boat from the ferry and let it float into the Khwāja's waves. Round featherless arrows and four-feathered arrows were all mixed together. the Khwāja himself will remember that battle'.² So runs a Balūch song. The Daryā-panthīs of Sind are believers in the sanctity of the River God or the God of Waters, and the belief affects Hindu and Muslim alike. Khwājo Khizr has a place all to himself as the Zinda Pīr, the living

¹ *Aspects of Life in Islām*, VI pp 184-209 *passim*

² Longworth Dames *Popular Poetry of the Baloches*, p 73

Pir, who has drunk the waters of life and will live till the last day when, after being reduced to dust, he will be raised up again with the rest of mankind Burton quotes a hymn in honour of the Indus where the river is addressed as Khwājo Khizr (*History of Sindh*, p 327)

Then finally there prevails throughout Islām the belief that the saints are not dead, but merely sleeping They are within their tombs Their tombs have become their houses which they can leave and whence make journeys They are accessible to prayer and grant favours This is the solid foundation of the extraordinary devotion paid in Sind to the tombs of the deceased saints, pirs and holy men This devotion is bound up with the system of personal religion that exists in the relation of pīr to murīd The disciple must obey his spiritual director From this have risen many darwīsh orders commonly called after the name of the saints who founded them Thus present practice and continued tradition combine to weld the whole into a coherent system, the roots of which go deep into the past

From the thirteenth century onwards there was a great immigration into Sind of learned and religious-minded men from the centre of the Muslim world Lāl Shāhbāz, who came with several companions, some of whom made names for themselves elsewhere in India, was a man of this kind The ancestor of Abul Fazul was another The great ascendancy of the Sayyids in Sind doubtless dates from about this time It was a time when Islām was expanding territorially once more The labours of the Muslim scholastics had hammered out a kind of stabilized religion in which the austerities of the Korān and the Traditions had been widened and softened by the influence of the Persianized Muslims of Central Asia It is noteworthy that at an even earlier stage there had been signs of unorthodoxy amongst the governing oligarchy in Sind For we know that there had been more than a trace of Qarmatian doctrine We know also that some of the native Sindhi rulers who succeeded the immigrant Muslims as rulers from the eleventh century onwards were affected by this, when they began to turn towards Islām Most of the Sayyids were of Shīa persuasion and it is possible that Sind was for a time a congenial home for these immigrants That there has been any consistent progress of Sūfism in Sind I do not believe What seems to have happened is that occasionally an exceptional man versed in the literary heritage of Persia emerged from among his fellows and gained a reputation for learning and sanctity

That the refined and idealized religion of a man like Shāh Abdul Latīf was really typical of the populace at large cannot be true

The esoteric meaning of mystical poetry does not come to an unlettered multitude. But failure to reach this level of understanding does not mean that the poems as musical compositions did not make their appeal or that they failed to illuminate the beliefs of the common man. But a mighty gulf yawns between the thinking of Shāh Abdul Latīf and the utterances of the itinerant fakīr who calls on Allāh with unwearied reiteration till exhausted he unkles his bell while his mind wanders in amazed ecstasy. Yet popular nomenclature would make both men Sūfis. We might as well expect Plato and the village mummer to speak a common language. The real message of tasawwuf is with the intellectuals, not with the professional performers of routine. Sūfism in Sind has been handed down by a handful of learned men from age to age. It is they who have kept alive the spirit of its idealism. Its philosophy needs no intoning reiteration. It depends for its enunciation on the services of no wandering beggar clad in woollen cloak and clutching in his hand a hollow gourd.

'Live on O Sweet One Live
 May mine ears never hear
 An evil word of Thee
 Brought each to other near
 Mine eyes and heart combine
 To speak of Thee and Thine

BOOK III

THE POEMS

' Ah Love ! Could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire ! '

RUBAIYÂT OF OMAR KHAYYÂM

' The veil between God and his servant is neither
earth nor heaven, nor the Throne nor the Footstool
thy selfhood and illusions are the veil, and when
thou removest these thou hast attained unto God '

ABU SAÏID ABU'L KHAIR

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

IN presenting this verse translation of the *Shāh Abdul Latif jē Rīsālē jō Muntakhab* I take the opportunity to offer a few explanations. The translator is always faced with a dilemma. Is he to reproduce the words or the spirit of the original? Is he to be a photographer or an artist? There is no resolving this dilemma. In the end the translator falls back on some kind of compromise because rarely is it possible without loss to transmute the genius of one language into that of another.

In the difficult poems of this eighteenth-century Sindhi poet I have striven throughout to catch the spirit of his poetry. But I have also endeavoured to keep the actual words of the translation as close to the text as circumstances will allow. My translation is generally faithful to the original, except where the exigencies of metre make some latitude inevitable. But these concessions to the needs of English have been few. The metaphors and similes of the original have been retained even where they may appear strange and unfamiliar to English readers. In only a few cases have I slightly altered metaphors or changed the order of words. I may state quite frankly that I have found it impossible to reproduce the brevity and succinctness of the Sindhi text. The poet employed a highly developed form of language admirably adapted for its poetical, mystical and religious purpose. He knew throughout that his hearers were familiar with its implications and allusions. The translator into a foreign idiom is therefore handicapped. He cannot merely translate and remain intelligible. He must explain subtle nuances of meaning which the Sindhi takes for granted.

Another matter of importance is that the attempt to catch the spirit of the original has necessitated the use of a vast variety of metres. Most of these are based on conventional English models. For the finest of the short lyrical poems indeed English proves itself an admirable vehicle of expression. The translations will also make clear the general seriousness of the poetry. It is only occasionally that a lighter and more flippant note is struck. In a few cases I have tried experiments in English verse which are more in the method of modern poetry with its greater freedom from restraint in metrical form. Thus in some of the poems in 'The King and the Minstrel', in 'Lilan and Chanēsar' and in 'Māruī and Umar' will be found examples of unconventionality, of attempts to explore new ways of sounding the lyrical possibilities of the English language.

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One great difficulty in dealing with the mass of poems of the Muntakhab lies in the irregular length of the baits. It is not easy to run one bait into another in order to obtain the regularity characteristic of English poetry. The baits are usually self-contained. The thought often changes abruptly from one to another. The unequal length of the baits is therefore something which the translator can do little to cure, even if it be thought that a cure is desirable. Personally I regard the irregularity in length as something worth preserving because it is a sign of the spontaneity which is a supreme merit of the original. No translator can regard his work as satisfactory unless he induces his readers to seek the original for themselves. I am hopeful therefore that this work, whatever its shortcomings, will lead to the study of the Sindhi text. Scholars and lovers of rhythmical language are assured of finding in it something that will prove of lasting delight.

H T SORLEY

Bombay

March 31st, 1938

THE RISĀLO OF SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT

Re-arranged and translated into English verse

‘ Life like a dome of many coloured glass
Stains the white radiance of eternity ’

SHELLEY

PART I MERCY AND GRACE

PART II THE DAILY ROUND

PART III LOVE

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*Arrangement of the Surs in this Translation and in
Pōkardās's edition of the Muntakhab*

This Translation

Pōkardās's Edition
Surs showing cantos, couplets,
verses and wais

PART I

I	Kalyān	I
II	„	2
III	„	3
IV	Chaman Kalyān	I
V	„ „	2 (1-3)
VI	„ „	2 (4-7)
VII	„ „	3
VIII	„ „	4
IX (I, II and III)	Samundī	1, 2 and 3
X	Srīrāg	I
XI	„	2
XII	„	3
XIII	„	4
XIV	Khambhāt	I
XV	„	2
XVI	Āsa	I
XVII	„	2
XVIII	Prabhātī	Whole
XIX	Barvo Sindhi	Whole
XX	Bilāwal	I
XXI	„	2

PART II

I	(I)	Sārang	I
	(II)	„	2
	(III)	„	3 (1-3)
	(IV)	„	3 (4-7)
	(V)	„	4 (1-5 (2))
	(VI)	„	4 (5(3)-(11))
	(VII)	„	4 (6-8)

*This Translation**Pōkardās's Edition*
Surs showing cantos, couplets,
verses and wais

II	(I)	Kēdārō	I
	(II)	„	2
	(III)	„	3
	(IV)	„	4
	(V)	„	5
III	(I)	Sōrath	I
	(II)	„	2
	(III)	„	3 and Wai
	(IV)	„	
IV		Khāhōrī	Whole
V	(I)	Rāmkalī	I
	(II)	„	2
	(III)	„	3
	(IV)	„	4 (I-4)
	(V)	„	4 (5-8)
	(VI)	„	5
	(VII)	„	6
VI	(I)	Kāpātī	(I-8)
	(II)	„	(9-13)
	(III)	„	(14-25)

PART III

Sasui and Punhūn

I	Rip	I
II	„	2
III	Dāhur	I
IV	„	2
V	„	3
VI	Kōhīārī	I
VII	„	2
VIII	„	3
IX	„	4
X	„	5
XI	„	6
XII	Sasui Ābrī	I
XIII	„ „	2
XIV	„ „	3

SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT

307

This Translation

Pōkardās s Edition
Surs showing cantos, couplets,
verses and waīs

XV		
XVI	Sasui Ābrī	
XVII	" "	4
XVIII	" "	5
XIX	" "	6
XX	" "	7
XXI	" "	8
XXII	" "	9
XXIII	" "	10
XXIV	Dēsī	1
XXV	"	2
XXVI	"	3
XXVII	"	4
XXVIII	"	5
XXIX	Maizūrī	6
XXX	"	1
XXXI	"	2
XXXII	"	3
XXXIII	"	4
XXXIV	"	5
XXXV	Husamī	6
XXXVI	"	1
XXXVII	"	2
XXXVIII	"	3
XXXIX	"	4
XL	"	5
XLI	"	6
XLII	"	7
XLIII	"	8
XLIV	"	9
XLV	"	10
XLVI	"	11
	"	12 (1-4)
	"	12 (5-24)
<i>Suhinī and Mēhār</i>		
I, II, III, IV, V	Suhinī	
VI	"	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
VII	"	6 (1)
		6 (2-4)

*This Translation**Pōkardās s Edition*
Surs showing cantos, couplets,
verses and waīs

VIII	Suhmī	7 (1-3)
IX	„	7 (4-15)
X	„	7 (16-25)

Mōmul and Rānō

I, II, III, IV	Mōmul Rānō	1, 2, 3, 4
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Līlan and Chanēsar

I	Līlan Chanēsar	1
II	„ „	2 (1-5)
III	„ „	2 (6-11)
IV	„ „	3 (1-3)
V	„ „	3 (4-6)
VI	„ „	3 (7-13)

Māruī and Umar

I	Māruī	1 (1-5)
II	„	2 (1-5)
III	„	1 (waī)
IV	„	2 (6-9)
V	„	3 (1-10)
VI	„	3 (waī)
VII	„	4
VIII	„	5

' Why dost Thou hide Thy lovely face ? O why
Does that eclipsing hand so long deny
The sunshine of Thy soul-enliv'ning eye ?

Without that Light, what light remains in me ?
Thou art my Life, my Way, my Light in Thee
I live, I move and by Thy beams I see '

FRANCIS QUARLES ' The Divine Lover '

' Love bade me welcome yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything ? '

GEORGE HERBERT ' Love '

' Let this immortal life where'er it comes
Walk in a crowd of loves and martyrdoms
Let mystic deaths wait on thee and wise souls be
The love-slain witnesses of this life of thee

RICHARD CRASHAW ' Upon the book
and Picture of the Seraphical Saint
Teresa '

' Dead be my heart to all below,
To mortal joys and mortal cares
To sensual bliss that charms us so
Be dark, my eyes and deaf, my ears

ISAAC WATTS ' The Farewell '

' Said I ' To whom belongs thy Beauty ? ' He
Replied ' Since I alone exist, to me
Lover Beloved and Love am I in one
Beauty and Mirror, and the Eyes which see '

ABU SAYID IBN ABUL KHAIR

PART I

MERCY AND GRACE

‘ God of Mercy, God of Grace
Show the brightness of Thy face ’

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SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT

I GOD THE ALL-POWERFUL

In the Beginning Allāh is,
 Who Knoweth All, Who sits aloft,
 The Lord of all the World that be
 He is the Mighty, Old of Days,
 Of His Own Power Established
 He is the Lord, One, Only One,
 Sustainer and Compassionate
 Sing ye the praise of Him Who Heals,
 The True One, sing ye praise of Him
 He is the One, Who Hath No Peer
 Confess ye this In heart of heart
 Acknowledge ye The Praised One, who
 The Causer of the Causes is
 Why go ye then and bow yourselves
 In front of others, why go ye ?
 Men were who said 'He is the One,
 Without a Peer', in heart of heart
 Acknowledging the Praised One, who
 The Causer of the Causes is
 Such men did from the righteous path
 Set not an erring foot astray
 Men are whom God the One hath cut,
 Whose bodies He hath cut in twain
 Who, having seen the severed parts,
 Doth not for self, unfortunate,
 Desire like theirs the severance ?
 God who is One no rival hath
 Herein of Him the Oneness is,
 And righteousness of Truth But who
 Embraced false Two-ness lost indeed
 The savour and the salt of life

II THE HARD WAY

My weakness pleaseth In God's ears
 The cries of my love-torment ring
 I tasted from the gallows tree
 The goodness that my sorrows bring
 The gallows calls me Oh, my friends,
 Will any friend now come with me ?
 They who have found the name of love
 Must go of love's necessity

The scaffold of its very self
Doth summon lovers Do ye seek
To know what love is ? Fare not forth
Put heads aside as little worth
And, asking then what love is, speak

The noose ('tis in the web of things)
Adorneth lovers Sayid sings
'They saw love's spear and trembled not
Upon the block they took their stand
Love called and they dissembled not
Love set them there 'Twas love's command'

When love takes knife in butcher hand,
Sharp be it not But rather may
Its edge be blunt For then on thee
Beloved's hands will longer stay

Of love thou knowest why and how ?
The knife falls Let no grumble start
Tell nought to others of the smart
Beloved caused thee Make thy vow
And keep the pain within thy heart

In front are lovers on the block
With heads prepared, they stand behind
Cut off thy head So failing not
Thou mayest true acceptance find
No severed heads then on the ground
Will bring thy failure to thy mind
Within the wineshop slaughter rolls
In waves of flooding unconfined

If sipping hath thy fancy led
The wineshop is the place for thee
Beside the wine-jar lay thy head
And, yielding it in bargain fee,
Quaff many cups of wine instead

Set not love's store against the wine
Nor count wine dear at such appraise
Prepare that head for cutting, thine
The wineshop is the place for them
Who by the wine-jars end their days

'Tis poison that all lovers sup
 But lovers see it and rejoice
 The bitter and the deadly cup
 Is theirs by use, by wonted choice
 'Love's arrow pierced them', says Latīf
 The seas of separation roll
 And drown each single, separate, soul

Why for such drink do yearners ask
 If back they flee to save their lives
 Whene'er the vintners draw their knives ?
 But they whose heads are given for wine
 May sip the wine within the cask

Yes, let them think of wine indeed
 Whose severed bodies lie apart,
 Whose flesh within the cauldron burns,
 Who let their hands, with deadly turns,
 Wreak havoc on their living heart

Who dull existence would conserve ?
 For no such aim the lover strives
 One breath from the Beloved's lips
 Is better than a thousand lives
 And can this skin and bone of mine
 Compare with the Beloved's wine ?

III LOVE IS ENOUGH

The friends who planted in my heart
 The questings of my pain,
 My friends have gone and from my mind
 Have sorrow's fardel ta'en
 Nor pleaseth the voice of the Healer now,
 'Tis an empty sound and vain

O taste thou wisely, sweetness all,
 Of bitterness ne'er a trace,
 Beside thy friends thou shalt surely find
 But the griefs that have settled on thee
 And made thee their dwelling-place,
 To stranger folk wilt thou call to mind ?

The folk will ask, and a smile extend,
 'Tell us, where is hand of thy Friend ?'
But lovers from 'neath the spear of love
 Take not themselves away
The lover meets death, head held above,
 And when there cometh the hour to slay,
 'Tis for death, thus slain, that the martyrs pray

IV THE PHYSIC

All wretched folk 'neath aching wound who bend
Are grateful for the pain that dwells within
They wind the clew of torment to its end
And cut not short the thread of life they spin

O thou Physician, give me not the dose
That maketh well. For I shall then be strong
To ask of me how now my illness goes
Then never friend may haply chance along

False healers have my feebleness unmanned
The true physician did not come to me
But quacks employed their cauterising brand
And brought more aches and pains than formerly

V THE FIRE OF LOVE

In agony loved ones are turning
There streameth the cry of 'Woe'
There is torment of fire and the burning
Consumes their vitals and, lo !
From their reins cometh savour of burning
Come look at this hap with discerning
If, trusting in faith, ye go

Do I shrink if my body be toasted
On embers of bābul and thorn ?
On the spit let my vitals be roasted
I am gone from the hands of the Healer
To my friends I must hue me forlorn

Ask the moths what know they of burning
 That have offered their lives to the blaze
 A thrust from the lance of yearning
 Hath pierced their vitals turning
 And put an end to their days

VI THE FLAMES

If fancy make a moth of thee
 The flames thou seest, faltering not
 Beloved's rare effulgence see
 And enter in, as bridegroom ought
 Still art thou as the unbaked clay
 Thou knowest not the oven is hot

Near the devouring fire they came,
 These moths determined Scorching blast
 Did not their steady courage tame
 All on the flames their bodies massed
 In one wild weltering holocaust

Within the heart red embers glow,
 But never outward vapours rise
 Heap up the fire and fan desire
 That being burnt may make thee wise

They surely in the trial have won
 Who died by death within the flame
 But they whose hands put out the brands
 Have gotten darkness for their name
 Within whose heart love's fires glow,
 They've learnt all men can ever know

VII LOVE'S PAIN

By lovers ne'er is God forgot
 In sighing dies their breath away
 They take no rest and sink o'erwhelmed
 If one sharp word Beloved say

For lovers are not like to thee
 Unmaimed limbs thee lusty keep
 They stand before Beloved's door
 And daily tears of anguish weep
 Nor any other way is right
 To find acceptance in Love's sight

Even now a mere straw pricks thee
And a trickle of blood doth start
But the wounds that thy loved ones cause thee,
How wilt thou bear their smart ?
And why seekest thou to discover
This love that tears the heart ?

It doth not make thee loverwise
To hide behind the screen and peep
Thy body in Beloved's yard
Thou hast not mortified nor marred
It is but empty vain emprise
To laugh and eat and sleep

O mother ! if thou hast not shut
The peeping crannies where folk peer,
Thou wilt not the Beloved see
In perfect beauty full and clear

O lovers ! sit by loved one's path,
Nor weary from Friend's lattice go
The loved one mercy's medicine gives
And from thy hot wounds takes the glow
Without thee, Love, life hath no spell
But Thou, without us, livest well

O lovers ! sit by loved one's path
And when from out the wineshop's store
They offer wine, keep steady head
And go not near the vintner's door

VIII THE HEALING

When there's no need no healer calls
Had love's sore pain been in thy side,
Then surely had the healers come
And healing hand to thee applied

Whate'er the healer gave to thee
Be brave and suffer Say not this
' They severed friend from friend apart '
Say rather ' Friends they joined in bliss '

Be patient, bow thy head and see
 Lo ! anger is a mighty woe
 In patience there abideth joy
 O honest Sir, this surely know

Be patient Patient folks prevail
 The stiffnecked are in sorry plight
 The palate of all hasty men
 Hath never savoured patience right

He eats the bread of punishment
 Whose early anger breaketh forth
 The man of malice holds his robe
 And finds within it nought of worth

IX THE SAILING (I)

O Mother, stay where the boatmen stay,
 Where their hawser is, remain,
 That they may not leave thee and slip away
 Plunging thy life in pain

O Mother, hard by their hawsers stay,
 Filling thy mind with woe,
 Lest the boatmen cheat thee and slip away
 Having kindled thy heart to a glow

While still their anchor unweighed they leave,
 Take speed in the chance and go,
 Lest the sailors pass from the land to cleave
 The channels where waters flow

O happy youth and happy tide
 When my friends cast out on the trail !
 I wept and wept but they would not bide
 Ah misery what can avail ?
 My tortured soul the trader hanged
 When he left me and hoisted sail

Ah, lack a day ! when they went away,
 To leave me alone, alone
 Age followed age in unending stage
 But there came back never an one
 For them who went will the heart be rent
 Of a stricken woman o'erthrown

When the sailors sailed out over the deep
The surge of the ocean's trend
Did bear them off, and they went away
Whither journeying hath no end

O mother of mine ! in my paltry life
This sailor memory stays,
And the trader seeking the distant port
Made the days succeed the days

The sailor bond that binds my heart
Is surely with grief entwined
The trader hath rent my soul in twain
That he leave me alone behind

Love pierced my soul and he fell to tears
When he set his hands on the prow
This commerce that thou hast learned, O Friend,
Have thou no truck with it now

Love letteth me not the rope untie,
But graspeth the very spar
This night, O Friend, for me remain ,
Go not, Beloved, to part us twain
In thy seeking to fare so far

Surely my melting soul is nought,
For while I stood on the strand,
Love came himself, the cable sought
And pushed the boat from the land
Of sailors I knew no useful lore,
Else then had my body's strength,
While the boat was standing there by the shore,
Been twined in the cable length

For friends who set on their journey forth
My body doth live in pain
O tell me in happy notes, O Crow,
When will they hither again ?
'Twas some powerful cause that banished my friends
In an exile over the main

O come, Belov'd, the tips of the sedge
Have been seared by the wind from the north
For thee, O Master of mine, my mouth
Thousands of vows sent forth

If thou would'st come to me now, my Love,
 Full joy to my soul I'd impart
 If, Mother, mayhap my lover should come,
 I'd cling to him, cleave to him, here in my home
 And speak out the words of my heart



If, Mother, my loved one should come to me now,
 In quarrelling joy would be sped
 Thou didst promise, my love, but few days to be gone,
 How long are the days that have fled?

O heart within me, out sally and see
 The abode that the Loved One doth know
 And there on his threshold stoop thee down
 And kisses on kisses bestow

Me let them not forgetful desert,
 Those friends for whom I did stay
 (And my eager eyes did scan the skies)
 When they will come to me, enter my home to me,
 My griefs they'll all banish away

IX THE SAILING (II)

In sooth today the traders talk
 Of going away and my friends
 Have set their hearts on departing too
 I weep but it makes no amends,
 They will not linger O Mother of mine,
 How long can I hold them back,
 Those sailors who set their ships on the deep
 When they made the cable slack?

From my heart there are those whom I may not loose,
 Nor may I forgotten be
 For their life to my own lifestrings is bound
 And lo! The crew when the north wind blew,
 Did set their canvas free
 They weighed their anchor and took their course
 Where the tide ran favourably,
 And longing there stays in my heart always
 For the men who plough the sea

The north wind's season is come and yet
My heart hath no rest from pain
The sailors, I trow, twist lanyards now
And are oiling their boats again

O Mother, I said (for I knew the sails)
The sailors are back from the world
Oh ! on this ship may my loved one come
The bunting flutters ! The sails are furled !
Those women, I vow, are smiling now
Whose friends have reached their home

IX THE SAILING (III)

Though I move my limbs yet I may not reach
The ports that are far for me
I have no purse, not a money-lot,
To make my truck with, and pay my scot,
And climb where I wish to be

O Thou who ferriest folks across,
Make me my loved one meet
O Captain, I stand at thy cabin door
To pour my prayers at thy feet

They had no scot to pay their lot ,
The sailors without their fee
Would grant no passage and all the day
Till sunset came, the ship made way
Across the waters' face,
And when it served the vessel's need
(So sings the Sayid) the Lord decreed
An excellent landing-place

I was standing myself by the very wharf
When my friends let the hawser go
Within my heart must some weakness be
Or else my friends to come back to me
Some wondrous kindness show

O Mother of his, hold not thou back
That trader son of thine
Till the twelfth month sere did he not appear ,
Then his gear on the shore he gathered once more
And sailed off over the brine

I was standing myself by the very wharf
 When my love let the hawser go
 Within my heart must some weakness be
 Or else my love to come back to me
 Doth wondrous kindness show

X THE TRAFFICKING

I have gained by my haggling the flimsy and false,
 The vows of my God I have broken
 My head on its empty framework of sins
 Is a crushed and a miserable token
 O dullard, thou knowest the sense of this thing,
 For its speech hath already been spoken

Thou hast gained by thy haggling the flimsy alone,
 Go, tell then to God thou art lacking
 Drive out thy deceit For the Lord loveth truth
 Love's bonfire blazing and cracking
 Kindle within thee and so wilt thou trade
 That gain there come of thy packing

The swing of the surge sets foul and the boat
 Cannot suffer its flooding and swelling
 I loaded her up to her hatches with sins
 In multitude far beyond telling
 God ! show Thy favour and take me across
 This ocean in terror compelling

Go Make thy purchase of goodly gear
 That loseth no virtue in aging
 For this thou wilt sell on a distant strand
 And lose not a plack in thy gauging
 So traffic in gear that will keep thee secure
 In the hazardous fight thou art waging

The galley is aged Heap not so high
 The chattels that are of thy lading
 Her timbers are riddled, by keel and by strake,
 The waters pour through them invading
 Her doom hath been sealed Oh ! ponder thou well
 The doings of yesterday's trading

Thou hast heard with thine ears the watery surge
'Tis here by thine eyes for the seeing
In the watches of night when men sleep, says Latīf,
Thou didst not remember its being
Thou didst bring thy craft to the eddying surf
For neglect this thy weird thou art dreeing

That galley of thine that goes crazy with age
Mayst thou save from the blasts that are blowing
For weak are the folk whose ship thou hast set
On the waterway turgid and flowing
These chattels of thine mayst thou bring, says the poet,
Where the lights of the harbour are showing

The grains that are stuff of thy trading bring
And load on the boat for the sailing
The waves will fight thee, forgetful one,
But sit not thus, sad one, bewailing
When thou wilt find thyself cast in the surf
I know not, a wretch unavailing

O boatmen! the best of both worlds can't be won
If all night by rudder you're sleeping,
Morning-news of you there, over there, all will ask
(Sleep-drowsed, in their helmsman trust keeping,
On board all are sleeping! You sleep, sailors, too!)
All who're sheltered of God, their trials will pass through
No port-peril harvest's for reaping

XI BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

O all thy works to God commit,
To God on whom there falleth praise
In meek submission being true
From tribulation free thy days
With mercy then the Mighty Lord
Will fashion what thy heart essays

Among good folk to do good deeds
Is surely everybody's plan
Thou dost good deeds amongst the bad
Is there, like thee, another man?

Good deeds are by good people done
 Ill deeds are with the wicked found
 They works of goodness do perform
 Whom good with fitting grace hath crowned

The lapidaries now are gone
 Who diamond pierced and ruby red
 But they who followed after them
 Have not the skill to work in lead
 Where craftsmen wrought of yore, the smiths
 Beat worthless pewter now instead

The taste is all for tawdry trash,
 When pearls are given in change away
 If I offered truth in garment's hem
 Of very shame I'd die today

Where'er today the pearls are found
 There now, alas, the thieves abide
 Good honest luck today is theirs
 Who laid their precious gems aside

XII THE LADING

To thee I said, O good my friend,
 No crazy wreck on work engage
 The waves, of certainty, will swamp
 The sails and sheets that fail for age

The surge will fight thee, foolish man,
 Arise and ask that mercy be
 I know not how it happed yestreen
 Thou wert not cast within the sea

Cloves, cardamoms and store of cloth,
 Sweet-smelling grass and ambergris,
 O merchant, let thy cargo be
 That thou dost set upon the seas
 No crazy wreck on work engage,
 For hark ! Ahead the breakers rage

Ināyat says 'The water's dread
Lives in the rolling ocean swell'
The milk of luck stays in the house
Of them with whom true things do dwell

Cloves, cardamoms and cloth and pearls,
They won wherewith to fill their store
Down in the water deep they found,
Of precious lockers, wealth galore

They tied their boats with hawsers fast,
So doth Latīf the Poet tell
They clomb aboard and to the Lord
The Prophet vows they vowed well
'O Thou-that-Art-with-Mercy save
The boats they set upon the swell'

XIII THE VOYAGING

Where shoals the channel, pull thy boat
And tie it up beside the brink
Who but thyself will help thee bring
It where to the depth the waters sink?

They who can swim upon the sea
Swim o'er the runnels small and great
But they who swim not load their heads
With burden of their turbans' weight

In trash I traded not a pearl
I laid in store The Sayid sings
'In lead I trafficked' Thus, O God,
My state unto thy mercy clings

While by the port the danger lasts,
O helmsmen, stay from slumber far
The whirling of the waters is
As frothing whey within the jar

The lightning flashed To luckless men
Fool slumber came and they who thought
They were from dire occurrence free
Were by their very sleep unwrought

Let Mecca be thy port or no,
 Delay not, urge thy vessel on
 Repeat at Lord Muhammad's tomb
 The holy words of God and doom,
 That succour come to thee anon
 So regulate thy ways and strive
 That thou at Mecca mayst arrive

XIV BELOVED'S BEAUTY

On the forehead of my Belov'd are set signs that are kind for me
 With a smile he comes to my courtyard where I long for him, mine
 own
 Who claims that the moon with the sun of Belov'd can ever the
 equal be,
 Though the moon to a white perfection on the fourteenth day be
 grown ?
 In my house there are folk a-talking of Beloved at the door
 In my house are happy welcomings The jealous jealous be !
 And yet, were a thousand suns to rise and moons four score and four,
 In the name of Allāh, without my love I should nothing but darkness
 see
 O moon, such a paltry thing as thou art, would I ever compare to
 the Friend ?
 His splendour gleameth for ever and lo ! only at night thou art
 bright
 At the hour of thy morning's uprising first thy glance on Beloved
 bend
 ' Beloved ! on thee are our trusting eyes set every day without end ',
 For Allāh's sake, speak thus in his ear of our lovesick sorrowful
 plight

XV THE WAYWARD HEART

O camel, cease thy lingering
 And lengthen out thy pace
 This once my loved one bring me nigh
 Then in thine ears there cannot ring
 The semblance of a yearning sigh

O camel, cease to lag behind
 And lengthen out thy pace
 This night I have it in my mind
 To see my loved one's face

For thee I bring the sandalwood
Let others salt-bush eat
This very night be thine the mood
To take me where my loved one stood
That there we twain may meet

The camel, mother, for my needs
I brought and tied beside the tree
When he on wealth of buds might feast,
He, sneaking, on the salt-bush feeds,
The mean and miserable beast,
Undoing all my work for me

The stupid brute I tell and tell
That in the milkbush there's no zest,
Yon poison bush is many's knell
But hath his silly head obsessed

Around in plenty for his need
Is ripened scrub of sandalwood
The sulky grumbler pays no heed
And makes me weep my tears in blood

And wilt thou thus, O camel, pass
The sandalwood, nor drink thy fill ?
Thou seekest not the fragrant grass
But spurnest it as something ill
It must be thy distorted mood
That made thee find the salt-bush good

Arise and bind him Let him free
And he will lose himself and roam
I feed him and he sulkier gets
Put on the saddle when he frets
With shackled feet still growl will he
But will not wander far from home

To keep him fast I tied him up
The shackles bound with tug and strain
The beast has gone with hobbles on
To eat the salt-bush once again !
O Lord, into this camel's head
Put something that in sense doth share
O save him, Lord of Mercy, save
Such is Latīf the poet's prayer

XVI ONE-NESS

Across life's ocean no one yet
 With 'I' as guide his foot hath set
 God indeed who is One
 Adoreth One-ness alone

Take Two-ness off to burn with fire
 Existence may man's tears require
 This weeping should be done
 Before One-ness alone

On self alone while eyes be set
 No truth of worship can'st thou get
 First kill all life's emprise
 Say Word of Sacrifice

What-no-existence-knows hath grace
 To raise the slave to lofty place
 Who secret are in their heart
 Are secret in outward part

Here how can mystery be told
 Which the Beloved doth enfold ?

XVII THESE PALTRY EYES OF MINE

These paltry eyes of mine
 Have brought me favour's grace
 If evil but before them be,
 They see Love in its place

If paltry eyes of mine
 Did aught but Love disclose,
 I'd pluck them out to cast
 As morsels for the crows

Mine eyes have made a feast
 Where kin and friends engage
 It is as if life, body, soul
 Had gone on pilgrimage

All day they look, and yet
 They halt out there to see,
 They saw and recognized Love
 And have returned to me

Strange habits have mine eyes
 To trade with others' pain
 Love's conquest they have made
 Where weapon brings no gain

XVIII THE MUSICIAN

Musician, you are wearied Where were you yesterday ?
 Give up, Latif is saying, your ways of giving in
 The door of the Almighty, go beg there on your way
 And gifts that are of value win

The gifts of the Almighty do not depend on caste
 The worker is the finder The King, All-Powerful, Great,
 Bears coaxings of the ignorant With Him the night who passed
 Will find that trouble's burden hath no weight

So, daily, earnest effort make before the Giver's door
 No other business has a singing stroller but to sing
 'Thou mighty art I yearner am Thou gift on gifts dost pour,
 While I am but a senseless thing

I heard Thy call, O God, and put my fiddle on my shoulder
 Thou mighty art I yearner am Thou gift on gifts dost pour
 I am a blockhead but Thou art of magic stone the holder,
 While I am only iron's core

If Thou but touch this iron 'me', gold I should be by reason
 Thou Giver art of gifts, the rest but wandering beggars are
 There falls in its due season rain, but Thou in every season
 Dost shower Thy plenteous bounty far
 Oh, would'st Thou to my house but come,
 All wealth I'd have and every sum '

XIX THE JOY OF BELOVED

After what goest thou ? Why dost thou remain
 The servant of others ?
 Stirrup-leather lay hold of, the Merciful One's,
 E'en the Lord of the World's
 For certain that man will be happy whose love
 Towards Allāh is turned

Today my poor eyes have remembered my friends
 And the dropping of tears
 Doth not cease from my cheeks At the sight of loved ones
 My desire doth not die
 Mankind covets wealth But all the day long
 Covet I my Belov'd
 I renounce the whole world for the sake of that Friend
 Whose name made me glad
 When the memory comes of the love of that Friend
 Sudden cries burst on cries
 In gracious emergence when walks the Belov'd
 E'en earth itself sings
 'In God's name' and lo! on the tracks of his feet
 Are the road's kisses planted
 The hours astonished stand by in respect
 I swear by the Lord,
 The face of Beloved's most lovely of all
 It's the way of the world
 To alter love's virtue and change it to dross
 No one e'er eats
 The flesh of mankind In this world will be left
 Only fragrant delight
 All the rest of mankind wear but friendship's false cloak
 Only one or two are
 Who are one with our heart O Giver, vouchsafe
 That friends present be
 On the tongues of my friends there is mention once more
 That we're reconciled
 My friends have this way that, break I with them,
 They break not with me

XX GOD'S MERCY

The kettledrums are hollow break them up
 Seek no door but the Holy Prophet's door
 He bears the loads of all who run for help
 And is the stay of helpless folk and poor

The Kindly Helper turns not face aside
 When myriads seek his mercy, says Latif
 His suppliants stand in dumbness, million massed,
 And in his open smiling win relief

At sundry landing-places do not halt
Look for the easy bank within the mere
The Helper will you mint of money give
Go thither, land of princely Rāhū near

Watch for the turban of the Bounteous One,
Who made the luckless wealthy, who destroys
The rust of want for millions when he speaks
And lifts his head aloft to work such joys

Serene He stands, The Friend and Comforter,
Who calls to His companions Every one
By help of that dear Comforter will cross
In safety land wherein the passes run

XXI THE GUIDE

Live on, O Sweet One, live
May mine ears never hear
An evil word of Thee
Brought each to other near,
Mine eyes and heart combine
To speak of Thee and Thine

Live on, O Sweet One, live
May mine ears never hear
An evil word of Thee,
Of Thee who didst appear
But yesterday to grace
My soul's unworthiness

Like Him who Arab was
No one, nowhere I see
In full forefront He stands
Where the Apostles be
And He hath pride of place
In majesty and grace

'Near, nearer came to Him
The Angel of the Lord
Than two bows' distance is'
Thus saith the Holy Word
Lo this is the abode
In Heaven on Him bestowed

Almighty God be praised
Who brought me such a Guide
His like the world knows none,
Nor Sind, nor Surat side ,
Nor anywhere on earth
Hath knowledge of such worth

O beggar, go and beg
Before the Giver's door
Seek favour of none else
Gifts he himself doth pour
He sees men's state and gives
Them mercy in their lives

My Lord and Master puts
The Mullas to their shame,
His horsemen set behind,
To head the host He came
The Lion of the Lord
To us doth help afford

And ever in His hand
He bears the mighty sword
That cleaves backbones of foes
His bounty's rich accord
A thousand Hātims' store
Hath darkened and made poor
Without Thee, Perfect One, who can
Help, succour give to helpless man ?

PART II
THE DAILY ROUND

' The daily round, the common task
Will furnish all we ought to ask
Room to deny ourselves, a road,
To bring us daily nearer God '

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I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (I)

See, saith Latif, the sombre cloud
Hath lowered and the big-dropped rain
Is fallen Take the cattle out
And make your way across the plain
Desert your huts Your panniers fill
Against the need of coming hours
It is no time in God-despair
To sit and idle Lo it showers !

See, saith Latif, hath Allāh brought
The clouds in ever thickening mass
From brimming pools the waters flow
To make the footing green with grass
God, One indeed, of gracious thought
Hath clad the paths in verdure, rain
Is come, blithe rain, for them who roam
Wayfarers draw fresh breath again

Today too in the northern sky
The clouds are gathered black as hair
The lightning flashes bring the rain
And choose a crimson cloak to wear
My friends that dwelt in far-off parts
Are by this rain-force drawn to me
Today too in the northern sky
The clouds to peaks rise toweringly

The lightning flash of timely rain
Doth not our simple souls bewray
Come, friend of mine, return to me
The sulking days are gone for aye
Across the Holy Prophet's tomb
The lightning streaks did swiftly leap
They smiled in kindness on the scene
And filled the stream with water deep

O Guide, send now Thine orders forth
And fill this thirsty watering-place
The Holy Prophet, best of friends,
Hath showed his abounding grace

O Lord of Rain, for Allāh's sake,
Forget not them whom thirst doth try
The plains have flood of water Make
The grain that groweth cheap to buy

Upon the land pour shower on shower
That happy may the herdsmen be
The lightnings came to bring the rain
The black cloud's flash delighted me
There in the sky the numbus grew
Until its burbling drops did start
My soul was sad The humming rain
Hath cleared the blight from off my heart

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (II)

Behind the tower the cloud today
Its form in lovely hues arrayed
Violas, fiddles, violins
And drums the happy people played

Last night out o'er the Padam Lake
The rangod emptied jar on jar
But wives are gloomy seeing cloud
And thinking of men's plight afar

They built them, spouseless, huts of reed,
But see them not Should north wind rise
And blow them down, who will there be
To hear the wives' complaining cries?

So may their guardian kin arrive
To give them shelter! Women see
The rainclouds and they think of men
And lose their souls in misery

They harken to the thunder's crash,
With heartstrings all a-quake with fear
Poor creatures, from their men cut off,
They speak no word to reach the ear

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (III)

The season's here
 Glad converse and sweet music sound
 Shrills cuckoo clear
 The ploughmen fit their ploughshares for the ground
 Herdsmen are happy Yea ! his fine array
 For joyous rain my friend has donned today

The season's here
 Glad converse and sweet music are
 Mass clouds appear
 The corn is cheap there's butter in the jar
 I spake the Word of God and by its art
 Cast out the rust that overlay my heart

The season's here
 Glad converse runs sweet music rings
 Rain's back to cheer
 Daylong I thought of friends (so Lakhmīr sings)
 My friends for whom these eyes of love did shine
 Have hither come and sought this house of mine

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (IV)

O Love, O Friend, may Allāh bring thee near me
 My life remembers, yearning with a full deep sigh
 I need the shelter they have made to cheer me
 No hut availeth if a chill wind whistle by
 Love, tell to kindly helpmeet my poor tale of woes
 Come timely, oft I may in shelter find repose

I shall of night-time's early cold be dying,
 O husband, perfect, if thy skirt enfold not me
 With cold I shiver neath the bedclothes lying,
 Or cling to door-pin, hoping dawn will bring me thee
 Like clouds in Sānwan, friends have gathered they are here
 They dwell with her who lifelong wished to have them near

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (V)

I need the shelter built for me
 No crazy hut have entered I
 Yea be she widowed who doth breathe
 One breathing after loved friend die

Today indeed towards the north
 Clouds form and water rains upon
 The earth to fill the hollow pits
 That men scooped out in days agone

O Master, build my shelter now
 Clouds I have seen athwart the sky
 ' Make Sānwan plans ', saith Jūnējō
 The thunder made my sorrow fly
 The lightning filled my heart with joy
 The sky is cloudy nor the sun
 Doth show his face with radiance clear
 The lightning bringeth kindly news
 Such as mankind is lief to hear

O heart of mine, be not cast down
 Soon wilt thou find thy friends again
 A second time has God arranged
 The fashioning of the clouds of rain
 To bring the rain the lightnings came
 To pour their water everywhere,
 This place and that and all around
 Will in such plenteous bounty share

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (VI)

The lightnings sped themselves aloft and glittered in Stamboul
 To Western parts they took their way
 They flashed and flickered in Cathay
 On Samarkand they lighted of their kindly memory full
 They fared to Rūm and Kābul and they reached to Kandahār
 O'er Delhi roared a thunder rain,
 And boomed above the Deccan plain
 And cast their living light-bolts out and over the Gīrnār
 They went aside and changed a course to verge on Jaisalmīr,
 On Bhuj a heavy drenching showered,
 On Dhat a gentle rain they poured
 And gladdened into happiness the folks of Bikanīr
 To Umārkōt they darted, there to flood the grassy meads
 On my Sind aye shed water, Lord,
 And plenty, Mercy's Self, accord
 Make this whole world to burgeon with Thy grace of rainy deeds

I THE SONG OF THE RAIN (VII)

The orders of the Orderer pass
 The rain god doth his function fill
 The lightnings come to bring the rain
 The pattering raindrops are not still
 The grain-amassers, mad on gain,
 Do wring their hands and fifteen grows
 From five—a threefold quickening
 So speed life's pages to their close

May all who trade in famine greed,
 May all the misers disappear
 The cowherds tell of heavy rains,
 'All hope to feel Thy mercy near'
 Within my heart the cloud-bank spins,
 The outward sky is calm serene
 The lightnings rain for them who love
 And in Friend-trust have eyesight keen
 In great and greater mass they form
 The clouds that gathered from the north
 Far-off my friends were God hath joined
 Them with me on their journeying forth

II THE MARTYRS (I)

Muhurram's holy month is come,
 The Princes' day of woe
 And Allāh doth what pleaseth Him,
 The One who all doth know

Again is come Muhurram's month
 But no Imāms are here
 O God, in kindness let me be
 Medīna's ruler near

Medīna's lords did hie them forth
 But they did not come back
 O brother dyer, dye my clothes
 In sober mourning black

They wandered forth to cruel doom
 When fate with bloodshed came
 Because of their untimely end
 I put myself to shame

The hardness of their martyrdom
Is as mild summer's day
No trace, no sign of Goddes love
Yazīd's heart did display

With the Imāms that he'd be slam
Did fate a promise write
The hardness of their martyrdom
Is unalloyed delight
And God-moved men do meditate
On Kerbela's sad fight

II THE MARTYRS (II)

Forget the feud with Ali's kin
That thou dost wage, Yazīd
With Hassan and the Mīr Husain
Thou'lt see no happy Īd

Ah ! luckless is the case of them
Beside Yazīd who stood,
And yesterday did fight against
The sons of Ali's blood

Oh ! that within the ranks had been
Hassan at battle-tide
As moth seeks flame, so had he sought
To reach his brother's side

Who other Mīr Husain could help ?
Of life still hope hath he
In battle time who armour dons ,
He showeth bravery

Alone who enters on the field
But Hassan is not by
To helpmate prove for Mīr Husain
Or aid in servantry

The Princes' land is farther on
And pours Yazīd amain
Blow upon blow The world doth know
Of Hassan and Husain,

And of the battle that they fought
 Black-feathered arrows flew
 The Holy Sayid showed himself,
 A hero brave and true

To self and his forefathers' race
 In grief three gatherings cry
 Men in their homes, beasts in the wild
 And angels in the sky

Their friends are gone the fowls of air
 To earth dashed bodies frail
 O Allāh ! righteous Master, grant
 The Princes may prevail

If there be men within whose souls
 No grief in sorrow flow,
 On them Creation's Mighty Lord
 No favour will bestow

II THE MARTYRS (III)

Brave men love battle, from the field
 Hold not themselves aloof
 The holy ones did yield their lives
 In the Imāms' behoof

' With God's name on their lips they fought ',
 Their wisdom ran thuswise
 They garlanded and crowned were
 By maids of Paradise

To Kerbela as lions came
 The perfect ones of God
 They plied Egyptian blades and heaped
 The corpses where they trod

And brave men trembled at the charge
 Of Lord Husam's array
 The Princes, perfect ones, are come
 To Kerbela today

They flinched not but their arrows shot
In swiftly-moving shower
Their fate foredoomed that they should be
With the Imāms this hour

God killeth whom He loveth most
Thus are His favourites slain
The All-Best, Allāh, recking nought,
Doth as His heart is fain

The wisdom in such actioning
Is veiled from mine eye
Behind remaineth something deep
And wrapped in mystery

II THE MARTYRS (IV)

Short are the days that horses live
Short days the warriors eke
Some time they man the forts, some time
The battleground they seek

Their home is Heaven Lo ! the brave
Are gone to Paradise
From God they passed to God they came
Lord, fashion fate this wise

Thankful for them Thy visage show
The early doom of prime
Did plan the plan of Hur's emprise
And bring him at this time

And set him with that side to join
To the Imām he said
Whene'er he came, ' This life is thine,
This life, though I be dead '

' God sends not woe without the power
To bear that burden well
What I can bear, that will I do '
There too that hero fell

With wound sore-stricken, yielding life,
 A martyr Hur became
 He showed his brave courageous soul,
 A lover of the flame

As moths are 'May God's Messenger,
 The Holy Prophet, He,
 Thy Father's sire, e'en thus be pleased
 With this thy bravery'

'May I for such yield up my life'
 His lips did these words pour
 Blood dyed his beard red, red his teeth
 As is pomegranate flower

His turban shone upon the field
 As shines full fortnight's moon
 Well may that mother smile who meets
 Her Lord Muhammad, son

All glory to that hero be
 Upon the open plain
 Who, hacked to pieces on the field,
 With grievous blows was slain

II THE MARTYRS (V)

The men of Kūfa wrote God's name
 And thus their missive sent
 'Thy subjects we, thou art our King
 Come hither pitch thy tent'

'The throne is thine' They falsely spake
 And sided with Yazīd,
 And brave men fell to unclean foes
 Who by ignoble deed

Sold trust for gain, in martyrdom
 The heroes' name to link,
 And Kūfa's host no water gave
 In Kerbela to drink

The Princes' thoughts in Kerbela
 Do with great Alī rest
 They venture forth and gaze around
 And thus their faith attest

Come, O Thou Lord Muhammad, come
 Causer of Causes, rise
 An early dove from Kerbela
 Its weary journey flies

Halting by God's apostle's tomb
 It uttereth this doom
 ' Muhammad, Causer of Causes, Lord,
 Come, rise up in thy might
 The glitter of the flashing sword
 Hath shone before my sight '

III THE KING AND THE MINSTREL

The Story

Rai Diāch was king of Girnār. His sister had a son named Bījal about whom a fakīr had predicted that he was fated to kill Diāch. The horrified mother cast her son away in a box upon the river, wishing to be rid of so ill-omened a child. The box floated down the river and was found by a professional minstrel who took the child out and brought him up to be a musician. Bījal, ignorant of his noble birth, became a past-master of music and won fame for his singing. Sōrath was the daughter of a king Anerai and her beauty was such that Diāch was enamoured of her at first sight and married her. Later hostilities broke out between Diāch and Anerai. Anerai besieged Girnār but was unable to capture it. Anerai then proclaimed that he would reward with great wealth any one who brought him Diāch's head. When Bījal heard this he went to Diāch. He so charmed him with his music and singing that Diāch, captivated, said he would give him all the wealth he had. But Bījal wanted no wealth, only the head of the king. Infatuated by the music, the king at last consented to yield up his head to Bījal. The poems of 'The King and The Minstrel' are concerned with the musician's visit to the palace of Diāch, the singing and the playing, the chaffering for the musician's reward and the grief of Sōrath when the minstrel won his way and obtained, as the fakīr had foretold, the head of the king.

III THE KING AND THE MINSTREL (I)

With hope set in Allāh he parted from here,
 The Singer who decked with a stringing
 Of tassels and rattles the fiddle he played
 He saw from afar the royal sedan
 Of King Dīāch and thus began
 At that very moment with prayer humbly prayed
 To Him who is One
 'O Merciful Master, by Thee be it made
 That the King shall delight in my singing'
 'From a strange land I'm come, having travelled last month
 If the night take a long time in speeding,
 E'en let me go now But this ponder well,
 O Sōrath's good spouse, in thy heart,
 To this beggar thy favours impart
 For he midst his foes hath come hither to dwell,
 At thy door, O King,
 Others' doors left behind, while the prayers on prayers swell
 In thy presence of suppliant pleading'
 'Nought else doth he beg give the jewel without price
 O Sōrath's good spouse, do me favour
 Others' doors I have left I am come to thy door
 With a turn of thy palms
 Give this beggar thine alms
 Fill his empty lap up' There was wonder galore
 That Bījal the Singer
 Should sing till the dawn and the King (nay! nay more!)
 The Sultān, found joy of full flavour
 As in his red swing he reclined and he cried
 'Come up, sacred bard, where clear space is
 At thy feet I would pour out in sacrifice
 A mint of money This head's my guest
 Come, here I yield it at thy request'
 In some men a deep perception lies
 To life's great mystery
 They reached In that Secret they made them wise
 Of things hidden whereof this the trace is
 Man is My secret I am his'
 Here lies the key to mysteries
 This phrase the singer took to sing
 The song he sang before the King
 And when he sang, where there were Two,
 The pair to single One-ness grew

III THE KING AND THE MINSTREL (II)

The first night came
Beside the fort the man of music sang
And in Gīrnār a loud commotion rang
'Some holy mendicant is here' The sage
Worked wonders with his lute and zither string
'Thy head I ask for, King', did Bījal sing

There came the second night
The Sultān summoned Bījal, told him 'Ne'er
Hath such as thou, Musician, ere come here
At thy pipe's tune, stands life from soul apart
Much wealth have I in goods, there's nought I lack
I'll give thee gifts that will delight thy heart
Come, worthy Sir, tune up let music start'

The third night came
When Bījal told the King this tale of song
'While generous men on earth are hundreds strong
Indeed, by some mind-fancy I was led
To thee, and to thy house am come instead'

The fourth night came
'Welcome, O welcome, Bard' the king did say,
'Not with uncounted wealth thy footsteps' way
Would I compare, if thou but happy be
Of rich abundant gifts take thou thy fill
These presents now I give thee there are more
Tomorrow I shall add to swell the store'

The fifth night came
Great wealth of silver did on Bījal pour
Came couches, cushions, palanquins and more,
Nine lakhs of money and nonillions o'er
But Bījal said 'The gifts are not for me,
O generous one The elephants take back
What first I asked for, give to me, thy head,
That thou to happiness itself be wed'

The sixth night came
The sage plucked strings and folk's attention drew
Within Gīrnār he sang the strong notes flew
Tomorrow (saith the Sayid) thou'lt please the King,
Who will, Musician, thee to honour bring

III THE KING AND THE MINSTREL (III)

King

' If on the scales an hundred heads I place
 To weigh the whole against thy music,
 The weight to that scale fails where Bijal sings
 Mine head's but empty bone-space
 There's no strength within it '

Minstrel

' Put in my robe what's tuned to music's strings
 Send me not back I came at earliest minute '

King

' Mine head, o'er thine, for thee I'd sacrifice
 O man of music, what thy worth convinces
 Thou get'st not from mine hands '

Minstrel

' This way, that way I searched and with mine eyes
 I looked on other princes
 Within my mind I fixed of other lands
 The princely givers, none within my reck
 Save thee endowed with will to yield his head '

King

' Welcome thou art, O man of music
 Thy meaning's drift I knew What thy tongue sped
 I comprehend completely, all thy words
 What falleth to the ground
 Be pleased to take '

Sayid

All three in tune were wed,
 The music's chords, the dagger and the neck

King

' For no such prize, O man of music,
 Hast thou, ere this, made journey God be praised
 O man of music, that thou sought'st the head '

Sayid

Fine instruments he took of cunning sound,
 The skilful master of music,
 And from the start in motion set the chords
 Before the kingly presence When he gazed
 Diāch at once saw clear
 And manifest the meaning's power

The singer drew the knife and plunged it deep
 Within Dīāch's skull The flower
 Of Gīrnār's plucked and weep
 The wailing women Hundreds like Sōrath
 Stand up and moan The head, with crowning lock
 Arranged, they give the man of music
 And bitter is the wailing women's cry
 'Last night the King did die'

III THE KING AND THE MINSTREL (IV)

Dīāch the King hath yielded up his head
 (To God, to God a sacrifice)
 And left his kingdom and the queens he wed
 (To God, to God a sacrifice)
 He found acceptance under Allāh's door,
 (To God, to God a sacrifice)
 His million-numbered needs fulfilled, told o'er
 (To God, to God a sacrifice)
 With bowstring-song his head the Singer sought,
 (To God, to God a sacrifice)
 His works, O sisters, to good endings wrought
 (To God, to God a sacrifice)
 Abdul Latif it is
 Who makes these harmonies

IV THE WANDERERS

O mother, I saw the folk who saw
 The man I love Nowise, no way
 Can I describe them 'Tis their law
 In rags and dust to pass along
 They do not midst the foolish throng
 Talk openly Perfection's spell
 Binds them my lover's tale to tell

Their loins betimes Khāhōrīs girt,
 And wandering off amongst the hills
 One made themselves with earthy dirt
 To torture they their bodies gave
 Amidst the rocks they found their grave
 On barren hill there stands a town
 Of which to them the trace was known

They thither went and left tilled land
 And store of grain, upon their quest
 To be of Lāhut Dust of sand
 Descended on them of the town
 That stands upon the barren down
 Behind them much of sleep they put
 And made them townsmen of Lāhut

For they that certain knowledge won
 Where stands on barren hill the town
 Behind them empty thoughts they put
 And made them townsmen of Lāhut

V THE HOLY MEN (I)

In the world are Jōgīs who worship light
 In the world are Jōgīs who worship fire
 Without the holy men who lit the fire, the holy men,
 I cannot live

I was asleep on my couch a deep sigh woke me
 Without the holy men who woke me up, the holy men,
 I cannot live

I look for them and fain would join them
 The Bairāgīs went and took themselves away
 Without the solace of their company, the holy men,
 I cannot live

I die I beat my head I search with eyes
 Without the Holy Words they speak, the holy men,
 I cannot live

The footprints of the holy men are in Lāhut
 Without the ruby that they hold, the holy men,
 I cannot live

Those who are great took horns at morn and blew them
 I search and search for the Bairāgīs line
 In their holy seat they keep the sacred ambergris
 Without the holy men who have it, holy men,
 I cannot live

I saw their holy seat and am not pacified
The music of the holy men hath slain me quite
Sad weariness of heart is come upon me
Without the holy men, the holy men,
I cannot live

I saw their holy seat my spirit leapt in fervour
The music of the holy men at morning is not heard
The holy men who creep and crawl upon the sand,
Without the holy men, the holy men,
I cannot live

I saw their holy seat and put mine arm in mouth
Without the holy men who trudged Kelātwards,
Without the holy men, the holy men,
I cannot live

I sit with them I look but do not see
There is no beauty like the beauty that is theirs
With all my looking there is nought I see
Without the holy men, the holy men,
I cannot live

V THE HOLY MEN (II)

The first day brought me wisdom's gain
That not for one brief moment's spell
Do holy men with health feel well
No ! daytime's four long watches tell
For them a tale of crushing pain
So sings the Sayid, Jōgīs roam
Amongst the people quietly

Next day I sat and did behold
The form of life Bairāgīs keep
How o'er their threads the dustclouds heap,
And run of their lives is cheap
Their knowing hands the strings unrolled
And fashioned topknots skilfully
But they of their own agency,
Unhappy men, with none make speech
For Nāngas thus to gladness reach
And roam midst people quietly

The third day on their sacred seats
 They let the fire's dull smoulder glow
 The Jōgīs gathered sticks and so
 Made firebrands on the fire to throw
 Adēsīs know the fire that eats
 With burning pain No secret's heart
 By spoken word do they impart
 They roam midst people quietly

The fourth day came in open place
 A firm resolve they somehow made
 Within their hearts strong urgings played
 The Swāmīs in full worth arrayed
 Are merged in a golden grace
 And roam midst people quietly

The fifth day came and found them fancy-tied
 Within th' Adēsīs burgeoned sprouting pain
 Yet, willing, they descended to love's plain
 Night passed in torture (thus the Sayīd's refrain)
 Its whole night's passing But their sense descried
 The friends who wish them well They roam
 Amongst the people quietly

The sixth day came Some reverie held them fast
 Within th' Adēsīs God's prime urging rolls
 What cheers the One that too doth cheer their souls
 They beg in alms what five poor fingers seize
 And roam midst people quietly

They washed their threads upon the seventh day,
 The Sayīd says, and stood with folded hands
 Before God Indescribable To strands
 Of Rāma somehow secretly the bands
 Of their own lives they bound Great, far away
 And distant was the country whence they brought
 The signs they brought They lift their blanket-rugs
 And roam midst people quietly

The eighth day came The Jōgīs rose and went
 From place to place The Swāmīs learnt the way
 That fits for Union Ever Rām doth stay
 Within their being's self For holy pay
 They roam midst people quietly

The ninth day came and vigils lit their eyes
 He-who-is-Mercy all his mercy showed
 The Giver earning's gifts on them bestowed
 Where eyes see nothing there they make abode
 These are ascetics' holy signs They roam
 Amidst the people quietly

Tenth day's anointing came with holy oil
 And lo ! our friends are happy Of their power
 They turned the page of God's own union o'er,
 And found the Path, Latīf says, gūrū's dower
 The Jōgīs won the worth of holy toil
 And roam midst people quietly

There was fulfilment on th' eleventh day
 Of all Bairāgīs practised Holy shrines
 The Jōgīs visited and where there shines
 The seat of worship Holding breath alway
 They roam midst people quietly

The twelfth day brought achievement's double gain
 All on the pilgrimage had wishes set
 The Jōgīs won full honour, these who met
 Their gūrū-master and are back again

V THE HOLY MEN (III)

The Swāmīs' panniers are of sorrows full
 Within their bedding grief is packed and rolled
 They bound their lives to reverie's deep lore
 The Adēsīs blew their horns at early morn
 And went away Some kind of sorrow's lot
 Sanyāsīs have, that they go strickenly ,
 And smitten of the wound of God, Who is
 Beyond description's power, Bairāgīs reel
 The whole day's space and eight long watches through
 The holy men aye tremble at the Lord
 Come, let us look on the abodes of them
 Who pass the day and night in wandering
 Some kind of sorrow's lot Sanyāsīs have
 That they go stricken Yet no breath escapes
 Outside to show their inward wound of thought

Come, let us look on the abodes of them
 Whose minds are crushed and broken Let us see
 Th' abodes of them who live in such a plight
 The people of Lāhut, thus saith Latīf,
 Are not misled by any worldly gear
 The Swāmīs' care hath made my thoughts worth while

V THE HOLY MEN (IV)

If thou dost think ' I will a Jōgī be ',
 Break off all ties that link thee with thy kind
 Unite thy life to them who ne'er were born
 Nor e'er will be, that thou thine end may find
 Upon the plain of Love

If thou dost think ' I will a Jōgī be ',
 Kill all ambition's hope Become the slave
 Of them who're slaves of slaves With patience-sword
 Destroy all malice utterly, that so
 Thy name in Lāhut thou may'st then engrave,
 O Nānga's naked soul

If thou dost think ' I will a Jōgī be ',
 Kill worldly thought and hide it in the soil
 Light in thine heart the dully-glowing fire
 In mind count rosary's beads with humble toil
 Bear all God's little ways

If thou dost think ' I will a Jōgī be ',
 Drain cup of Nothingness and, sitting, gaze
 On Nothingness itself Lay hold of it
 (' Where there is I that Nothingness displays ')
 So, Seeker, full thy joy of pasture be
 With God, One, perfect One

Jōgīs have no hold on life
 Put on Jōga cease to live
 O hark! With these ears hear
 The message that I give

Self-ness destroy and from the self
 Lay self aside No life hath ' This ',
 No Life at all 'Tis fools
 Whose ' I ' in talking is

Be Jōgī whilst thou hast the power
 Else, shameless one, avaunt from here !
 Why dost thou bore thine ears
 If cold thou canst not bear ?

Flee hence ! go thither ! far away !
 Lest others thou do bring to shame
 Men who are slaves to food
 Are Jōgīs false in name

Immersed in belly-needs the throng
 Is worthless scum No sound comes clear
 To skull-placed ears then list
 To sounds with inward ear

V THE HOLY MEN (V)

Like to the pilgrimage to Sinai's mount
 Are the Sanyāsīs' flexed knees
 Within their ears they laid this holy word
 ' The Seeker after God is male '
 They cast aside, of full intent each wise,
 Whate'er there may in learning be
 Only the letter ' Alif ' the Adēsīs bore
 In mind for constant utterance
 They who have passed Lāhut reached Ulwahēt
 And not one word from them escapes
 Where lives despair, there is the place they live
 The huts they have are nothingness
 The will of God their order is they beg
 For not one single morsel else
 Filled with a vain concert, folk seek their homes
 But such are muddled, saith Latīf
 They do not find them and they lose their way

V THE HOLY MEN (VI)

By knife of some kind are the Swāmīs slain
 So that they know no happy life at all
 By day their bodies ache and all night long
 They suffer pain Hard is the life, my dear,

Lived by the Jōgī's kind They go to sleep
 At evening time But they are sitting up
 For mid-time's prayer and they who worship Shiv
 Wash not their faces, save it be with dust
 By dawn they're settled by the road-way's side
 To none this speech they utter 'We Adēsīs are'
 Within Adēsīs' eyes dwells humbleness
 They have no pedigree, no list of kin
 In every way the Lord abides in Swāmīs' souls
 Except a loin cloth, nought for self they keep
 For worship's sake they practise heresy,
 Know lore of demons and the things of ill
 But of the Lord alone true worship is
 There's none of pīr or prophet They do sin
 Who worship pīrs, and worse than these are they
 Who worship idols, those poor luckless folk
 From path misled who grasped untruthfulness
 Self worship not, thou faithful, pure of heart
 They who do this believe not Let disgrace
 Their faces blacken ! For they are accurst
 They're sinners, dogs to belly tied, and foul
 In evil-doing with no bounds On them
 Affliction's curse falls, and the wrath of God
 Of none but God is any worship meet
 O soul accurst, how brought'st upon thyself
 So great a sin, of self the worship made ?
 To get thyself extolled ? In part thou dost
 Thyself extol, in part thy sire extol
 Keep fear of God lest curse be thy reward

V THE HOLY MEN (VII)

Their wallets with hunger they filled
 For this is the way of their feast,
 And thirst is their drinking For food
 Jōgīs have not a care in the least
 The men of Lāhut, saith Latīf,
 Have twisted their minds like munj-grass
 The Swāmīs who wandered through wastes
 Leave the wastes and to clustered huts pass
 They measured the loin cloth of Love
 And girdled themselves with it round
 As naked they entered this world
 So naked they go from its bound,

And the signs of the Swāmīs are clear
 Where the sun's eastern rising is found
 Those Swāmīs who first thing at morn,
 Saith the Sayid, made question for food,
 Such Swāmīs are shameless in vain
 Can such men as Swāmīs be good
 Thou art asking for things that are past
 Make ready, go now, *now* instead
 Die today, die, Adēsī, today
 Tomorrow will all men be dead
 All men who to death are resigned
 The One God can never forget,
 As they go on their path, the ungart,
 No sleep for ascetics is set
 And a vigil keeps brightening the eyes
 Of them who with waking are met
 From Sanyāsīs who thought them of clothes,
 And of morsels of food to be fed,
 Stands Allāh still farther away
 What is past hath vanished and fled
 Ascetic, take Nothing's own self
 For Sanyāsīs the path's Ali's field
 They are seated with dust on their heads
 Where the plain of Lord Ali's revealed
 When they heard that the distance was great
 They left habitations and haunts
 And how wilt thou deal with the folk
 Whom thou kill'st with reproaches and taunts ?
 Those who find alms in hunger are they
 Who take for their incense the dust
 Having clothed themselves with a shape
 That the throng sees with shame and disgust
 For as long as they look, but see not
 Why Jōgīs to Jōgīdom grew,
 So long separation-sprung pain
 Racks Sanyāsīs the weary night through
 Not a smle, without eating or speech,
 Of such state or such trance they are part,
 That its meaning is hard to divine
 Throw the mendicant's dress o'er thine heart
 Deck thyself out in no showy garb
 Close the innermost port of thy soul
 Eat thy flesh, O Bairāgī Its scent
 Let thine incense o'er desert-land roll.

VI THE SPINNER (I)

You're not keen on spinning ! But sleeping and rest
 You must have for your bones ? All at once Īd will come
 And the folk without clothes wanting holiday best
 You'll be wanting yourself fine clothes to display
 Where your girl friends are calling you out for the day

You don't spin, you jade, or in wheel thread insert
 But you're always at hand for the weddings and throngs
 Can a girl with a load on her head sit inert
 Doing nothing at all ? While today, I daresay,
 You are dying for clothes, you spun none yesterday

Stupid fool, will your husband his favours bestow
 Upon you, how many ? You idled away
 The days meant for spinning, a fool not to go
 Near the wheel with the ball to be spun in your hand !
 Now you're big, will you see any thread on the stand ?

Even though you're grown big, rise, and come to the seat
 Take a spell with the rest of the women who spin
 Don't do anything else, so the merchant can treat
 With you too to-morrow when spinners he calls
 Like as gold are your hands for the spinning of balls

Why don't you spin then, you poor stupid fool ?
 Take your seat in the corner and spin Put a stop
 To the chattering talk When the merchant comes, you'll
 Change your goods with a smile for a price that is fair
 Use that old broken wheel, till the red one is there

Fool, don't make a way of enduring bugbears
 Of idleness Spin ! For God alone knows
 Who will spin with the new wheel You give yourself airs
 When you turn the wheel round So your husband's annoyed
 Wrap the cloth round your neck At the wheel sit employed
 Lest your toil, sorry fool, at the wheel to waste goes

VI THE SPINNER (II)

Spin, tremble and spin,
 Lest good luck you spurn
 Those who spin, mother, meet
 And forgather each turn

With conceit in their hearts
 If fine yarn they spun,
 Not an ounce would the merchants
 Accept of the run
 With love in their hearts
 If they spun but poor stuff,
 The merchants would take it
 Unweighed as enough
 What a wonderful thought
 These spinners conceive
 They tremble and spin
 For their gain they believe
 It is best to come early
 At morn to their seats
 ' Merchants dote on their beauty '
 (The Sayid repeats),
 Their yarn was accepted
 And put on the scales
 The merchants then weighed it
 To add to their bales
 Their yarn is of use
 Who card it in quiet,
 Who breathe not a breath
 Of the spinning wheel's riot
 Without show they tremble,
 Latif says, and spin
 If your yarn in exchange
 Wealth of rubies won't win
 Still its value will rise
 To a very good price

VI THE SPINNER (III)

' O smooth is the yarn that comes from the hands
 That teased cotton carefully carding the strands
 O mother, those girls who from muslin were taught
 The toil of their hands to a golden wealth brought '
 But she in her dress tucks the cotton away
 And wanders from doorway to doorway to say
 ' This cotton who wants spun by me ? For I spin
 The spindle is crooked Without and within
 The yarn is twisted Can spinning be done ?
 How much shall I gain from the cotton I spun ?

By the favour of luck midst my friends I'll be glad '
 In spinning fine yarn no learning she had
 Well ' let her spin coarse thread the merchants will take
 Even that on their scales, be it thick, and poor weight,
 And grace with their bounty the girl of ill fate
 Other girls turned their wheels while fear in heart stood
 Whatever their work was, their husbands found good
 When her cotton was weighed came the old flaws to view
 They called up the spinner and questioned her too,
 Apart, and she said ' I'm a poor lazy drudge ,
 The hard bits of cotton I could not dislodge
 The spinners, O mother, have teased out their stuff
 And gone to the quay for some reason enough
 I came up to meet them, from spinning seat rose
 Not one of them all in her body pain knows
 The wheels are dismantled The spinners where flown ?
 The clews of the worthies on floor have been thrown
 Yesterday all day long they spun and they spun
 Today at the seats there is present not one
 From their wheels they removed the cord of the cuts
 And now they have gone and closed up their huts
 In the midst of the trees no cotton plants are
 So here are no spinners The empty bazaar
 Has ensalted my heart ' Foolish girl, in your brain
 This truth ponder well and ponder again
 There were spinners who teased out the cotton with care
 By their hands (let it be but an ounce in the tare)
 Fine yarn was produced But your clews went astray
 By sparrows they're ruined by wind blown away
 You doze by your wheel held in sleep's pleasant sway
 The work of her spinning was scanty and rough
 Let the thread of the duffer be counted enough,
 (In the words of Ināyat), nor in need let her fail
 When her bundles of cotton are weighed in the scale

PART III

LOVE

'Love Divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heaven, to earth come down'

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I SASUĪ AND PUNHŪN

The Story

Sasuī, the daughter of a rich Hindu, a Brahman, was later because of her beauty adopted as his daughter by the chief of Bhambhōr. In due course she became herself the ruler of Bhambhōr. Owing to famine in Kēch the people of that land had sent a deputation to Bhambhōr to purchase corn. The leader of the caravan from Kēch succeeded in obtaining a remission in the price of the grain from Sasuī by promising to bring Punhūn, the son of Ārī Jām, the Chief of Kēch, to Bhambhōr. This young man was famed for the handsomeness of his features, and Sasuī was anxious to meet him. The caravan-leader, leaving the camel train at Bhambhōr, returned to Kēch and succeeded in getting Punhūn to visit Bhambhōr. There Sasuī and Punhūn fell violently in love with each other. Punhūn stayed behind when the caravan of camels loaded with grain returned to Kēch. Ārī Jām was angry that his son had not returned and sent the leader of the caravan accompanied by Punhūn's two brothers back to Bhambhōr to bring him home. This was done by the pretence of a friendly visit and then secretly one night Punhūn was taken away by his brothers. In the morning Sasuī discovered that the camels were gone and that her lover had departed. In a paroxysm of grief she set out on foot to track the camels and endured great hardships in her bewildered wanderings over the barren country that lay between Bhambhōr and Kēch, with its sandy deserts and its bare, gaunt mountain ranges. She perished upon the way in her search for her lover.

The poems of 'Sasuī and Punhūn' deal only with the events that happened when Sasuī realized that the camels had gone and that Punhūn had departed from Bhambhōr. The allusions to Sasuī passing her time with washermen relate to a version of the story that Sasuī spent some time washing clothes and that in Punhūn's courting of her he also had helped to wash clothes by her side amongst the washermen. People of Kēch are called Kēchīs and as Kēch is in Balūchistān they are referred to as Balūchī or Barōch in the poems. As Punhūn was the son of Ārī he is said to belong to the Ārīyānī family or tribe. The poet calls the Ārīyānīs by their name of Ārīchas also.

I

It is not right to tell one's woe
 And yet it is not easy
 To keep one's sorrow Even so
 Within my heart with twisting pain
 Unfittingness now comes again

Somehow or other in the kiln
 The vessel's nether rim is baking
 A sip of wine from love's own still
 I had from friends, but better far
 Low fevers than non-union are

I slept and there within me grew
 The branching of my loved one's vine
 For food pain, sorrow's pain, I knew
 I writhe and struggle in my grief
 Which stoppeth not to bring relief

All day my heart is out of place
 As strays the herd of camels far
 I loved no love to love displace
 My head is cloudy from mine eyes
 The misty fogbanks do not rise

Within my heart hath rained today
 The plenteous showering of my love
 Beloved, come, and carefully
 Look after me For I am wrapped
 In separation and entrapped

Some virtue had Balūchīs yet,
 Thus I remembered in my sleep
 The pillow at my head is wet,
 Is damp with weeping .Grief is green
 Upon my hand the tears are seen

Beloved, bring me to thy mind
 O girls, my life is passed in vain
 Mine eyes sleep not they do not find
 Within them idle ways ' They blaze
 Extinguished Friend, thy memory stays

II

The wind from the north
In its might hath gone forth
I have neither blanket nor sheet
Parching cold will unnerve them
Whose huts cannot serve them
Which totter when wintry winds beat

The wind from the north
In its might hath gone forth
I have neither blanket nor sheet
And all the night through
The sheet I pulled to
In the hope that its four ends would meet

Like the kiln potters shut,
Thy love dost thou not
Cover up? If the heat from kiln go,
Can the pots hardened be?
Keep the heat within thee
As potters preserve the fierce glow

Learn love's test of skill,
O my love, from the kiln
Though it burneth by night and by day,
From within its hot heart
Not a vapour doth start
The heat that's within to betray

III

O may the Lord cause wind to blow
That joineth friends together
Go that way choose, lest heart may lose
All hope of kindly weather

Mine eyes I lifted yesterday
To search for Kēchīs faring
Grant I may see the camelmen
Of Ārī Lord appearing

My gazing eyes were filled with blood
O Punhūn, this beseemeth,
To take with thee thine handmaid, me
Today with hope that teemeth

I cleanse the courtyard for their sake,
 So long ago they parted
 As mountain's age is May my friends
 Come hither whence they started

O Allāh, like Thy Name, as great
 My hope is Vast, unbounded
 Thy patience reigns, Creator, Lord
 Within my soul is founded

The Name of Thee as sweet it be,
 So lives my great hope sweetly
 No door like Thine is I have seen
 Of doors my round completely

O loose not, Thou, the bond of her
 Who humble is and lonely
 Thy Name my one sole shelter is
 Thy Name I cling to only

IV

Rise, sleeping one, awake
 So much thou should'st not sleep
 Thou mayst not savour the Sultān's favour
 If sleep thy senses steep

Part sleep, part vigil make
 To sleep o'er much is fault
 Thou thought'st this home where thou art come
 Nay! 'tis but traveller's halt

Sleep will not serve thee well
 'Where is Beloved?' say
 Thy time will go wrung hands will know
 The sad repentant's way

Fools saw the froth and passed
 The milk they did not taste
 For worldly greed they sank their creed
 And laid their souls awaste

V

O little crane, the flocking cranes
But yesterday did wing their way
Within the marsh without thy friends
What wilt thou gain by longer stay ?
The cranes fly off in gathered flight
Their bonds of love they do not sever
For lo ! within the gathered wisp
For them aboundeth sweetness ever
The little crane is wont to be
Where'er of cranes the flocking throng is
From her own kind to feed apart
Against the crane-clan's law a wrong is
O little crane, send forth thy call
The night hath sped the night is speeded
Fate hither brought the wandering cranes
It was their mountain land they needed
No blame to any ! Food will be
In the Provider's hand for thee
O little crane, within the wisp
There was a talking yesterday
In swamp thy brethren, sistern keep
Of thee a goodly memory
Alas ! thou dost not see the net
That in the fowler's hand is set

VI

Lax one, from laxness cease
Thou sleepest ? Shame thy soul !
The drivers quickly off
Ere now have reached their goal
Go, sleep, lest winding ways
In crying take thy toll

Neglectful, thou at eve
Didst sleep thy house within
Thine ears indeed were deaf
To hear no camels' din
Can they who sleep at eve
Beloved's union win ?

When sleeping girls their limbs
 Stretched on the couch had laid
 And they were sunk in sleep,
 Off went the camelcade
 By stretching limbs in sleep
 A great mistake was made

Wouldst thou by Friend's door stand,
 A whisper there would be
 From every bond and tie
 Of Ārī thou art free,
 And what can 'Punhūn' mean,
 If sleep befalleth thee?

Thou didst, asleep at eve,
 Wrap up thy face as dead
 Thou couldst not tell thine eyes
 How sleep is banished
 Thine own hand's work! Why blame
 The men of Kēch instead?

VII

Sasui

O mountain, you brought me grief
 I shall tell my friend when we greet
 There was terror at morning time
 In your twists and turns deceit
 No boon did you work for me
 Losing tracks of my loved one's feet

O mountain, first to my friend
 Shall I heap up your name with scorn
 How my feet were crushed by the stones,
 How my soles to ribbons were torn
 Not a thought for me, not a jot
 Of rue in your heart was borne

' 'Tis the mountain that brings me woe',
 This my cry to heaven will soar
 O mountain, torture me not,
 I have suffered much before
 No joy do I call to mind
 I remember of grief full store

O mountain, on suffering ones
 Should solace and help descend,
 And largesse of sympathy come
 To them who have lost their friend
 Then why, O stone, to their feet
 Is it torture you extend ?

O mountain, stricken forlorn
 Folk come to tell you their woe
 To them who are broken and bruised
 Should heartening solace flow

Sayid

They sit together, together they weep,
 Afflicted woman and mountain-steep,
 To none telling aught of the flames
 That within their hearts are aglow

VIII

Sasui

Mid the crags leave me not in the country of Hôt ,
 With thee, on my feet I shall trudge,
 Setting Bhambhōr in flames, so little I'd care,
 The Balūchīs' miserable drudge

Mean as I am, how can I address
 Punhūn, my love and my friend ?
 Completely sunk under Ārī's spell
 Clutching his garment-end

I am less, much less, than Balūchīs' shoes
 That they wear upon their feet
 Forgetting the Kēchīs how can I stay
 Resting upon the seat ?

Sayid

A poor, poor thing of little worth,
 The Balūchīs' veriest slave
 By the tie of the bond that was held to them
 Her liberty Sasui gave

Like reapers they cut all shame away
 And for her was the journey to Hōt,
 A chattel, a servant, a slave, and a thing
 With the gold of the camelmen bought

‘ Her liberty lies in Ārī’s hand ’
 (Let Poet Ināyat tell)

Sasui

- If out of their mercy they called me slave
 ’Twas a name that fitted me well

IX

Like a cloud the rays of Punhūn shine
 But waiting for Ārī I weep
 Many tears In surfeit of purest joy
 His rays my senses steep

I think of this awesome land as health
 Because of my loved one there
 From Ārī lord let calamity come,
 Still sweetness is everywhere

X

Many are the faults within me thus my reckoning, Noble Lord
 Ārī, do not leave me Meet me In my sorrow hope afford
 Come beside me, Guide, and guide me wandering upon the way
 Girl friends come and coming plague me ‘ Rest for they are
 lost ’ they say,

‘ Who set out upon their journey ’ Bound to kin by joyful ties
 They, unlike me, are not weeping tears of blood from weeping eyes
 Haply they may rest themselves then I am wed to wealth of woe
 Why do they on mat of mourning for sad folk prostrate them so ?
 They are not by wounds afflicted such as touch the inmost heart
 But they make pretence of grieving With a self-regarding art
 Not an anguished cry they utter for my love O tell, friends, tell
 Can the girl whose soul’s encompassed by the darts of love be well ?
 Or whose mind is crushed with sorrows sunken in a sorry plight ?
 Sisters, love without, I’m sickly Did I but a jot recite
 What my state is, beasts were tongueless, mountains would asunder
 go,

Trees would perish in their burning, not a blade of grass would grow

XI

How shall I weep for my love when I know not the way to weep,
 Lifting and lifting aloft the hands that are soiled with tears?
 Deserts are smiling land to them who are burnt with love
 Carry thou love to them who are searchers after the truth
 Where there is only One, the squint-eyed woman sees three
 Away with things that are Two go to the side of the One
 Thou revellest in deceit, O squint-eyed woman thy spouse
 Sundering cannot abide With them who would break with thee
 Break not but join thyself, like the fold of a garment's hem
 Sasuī, harsh though they treat thee, win them with merciful
 heart
 This bond that is noble and good beg for and, begging, pursue

XII

Be it soon or late let it be
 I must go to my Friend, I must go
 A heavy work thy handmaiden wrought
 O Master, bring it not thus to nought
 But grant this favour to me
 I am weary let me the camelman see
 While the blood in my veins doth flow

Slow melting is yearning's bane ,
 And verily Sasuī yearned
 She was steeped in the depth of Punhūn's love
 But her thirsting desire she could not move
 Love's water in gulps she did drain
 To bring to her only the greater pain
 Of the thirst that within her burned

The huts by the water stand ,
 But fools for the want of it die
 My friends are nearer than life to me
 But they find me not nor this truth can see,
 And complain like a stricken band
 Let Sasuī roam through the desert land
 Water hath made them thirstier yet
 Whose thirst within them doth lie

XIII

Sasui

I have no knowledge of the waste of scrub Men speak
 Of deserts stretching far Come back, my hope, my love,
 I weary wandering o'er the waste Thou spouse of mine,
 Make me not desolate, nor leave me thus upon the way
 I have no knowledge of the waste of scrub I drink
 No drop of water How the hills assail me and the heat
 Pours forth its fierceness (Hot winds blow amain,
 The poet says, upon a hapless soul) Come hither, come,
 O friend of mine, be with me for I am alone
 The waste of scrub hath lofty trees Folk say therein
 The black snakes dwell Come near me, O thou Guide, come
 near

Upon the way no family and no kin can comfort me

Sayid

The wretched girl had ne'er before beheld that waste of scrub
 No pitying eye of man could see her and the skies were dark
 O sisters, to her own great woe she made the camelman her friend

XIV

From women folk who sit and rest,
 Go, ask thou now of Punhūn's ways
 O wretched girl, within thyself
 Look for thy loved one all thy days

He is not where thou thought'st he was,
 Fond girl, thy lover from the hills
 Hillward then fare not Thine own self
 The place of barren Wankār fills

All strangers think as folk apart
 Ask of thyself where are thy friends
 O Sasui, make careful search
 Of all thy house's corner-ends

However far thou journey'st forth
 Lo ! is thy friend still at thy door !
 Return and ask thyself again
 Thy friend is on thy very floor

'Tis bootless wandering far afield
And crying out thy lord to find
Avoid the doors of stranger-folk ,
But search instead within thy mind

The loved one that thou sufferest for
Of very sooth resides in thee
Why go to Wankār, if not here
Thou searchest thy beloved to see ?

' Not hidden yonder,' says Latif,
' Is thy Balūch ' Thy merit prove
Gird up thy loins and so fulfil
The promise of thy Punhūn's love

With closed eyes search and see within
Thyself how doth thy love appear
False are the womenfolk who ask
For Kēch, but not for Punhūn here

But womenfolk whose hearts in his
With bonds of love are intertwined,
Have banished their journeyings
And cast foot-wanderings from their mind

Go with thine heart towards thy love
Forget foot-wanderings thou didst wend
It is not like a messenger
That thou wilt reach thy journey's end

Go with thine heart towards thy love
Cease, Sasuī, wanderings of thy feet
Ask not the sand how lies the path
To travel soul-fully is meet

Go with thine heart towards thy love
And roam not where the mountains stand
' Within my heart I found my Lord,
The man of Kēch's hilly land '

Go with thine heart towards thy love ,
Discard the body's weakly aid
They who their worth of soul did know
By side of loved Āriyānī stayed

XV

Can girls who yearn not reach the desert scrub ?
 Nay ! they will falter on the way o'ercome
 By thousand-fold desire, themselves desire's own soul
 Not one will suffer hunger Such poor folk
 Are stopped of progress But let her proceed
 Who doth not reck of putting life to risk
 No lover of soft ease may come with me
 But those whose inward souls are racked with pain
 May search with me throughout the mountain land
 Ye who have husbands, turn ye back Return
 I shall not, if my spouse be not with me
 I'll drarn the dregs of searching fearsome hills
 I'd little loving with the camelmen
 Return, all ye with husbands Parting's rift
 Is said to frighten If love's fire within
 Heart's portal burns for women, women will
 O'er hillside wander and o'er mountain roam
 That promise thou didst make on Windar once
 Fulfil for me, Barōch, my friend, who am
 Dead, helpless Yet must Sasuī herself
 First keep her promise, then must Punhūn his
 Forget not then the trysting made with Hōt
 The words they spoke thou heardest Slumber not
 How wilt thou treat the hills the wanderers passed ?
 In Bhambhōr townsmen held much argument
 Can she come back, the lifeless one whose love
 The camelmen abducted ? Mother mine,
 Oh may I not return and die, but die
 Before returning Suffering torment for my love
 I may perchance then stumble on his footsteps there

XVI

O girls, my friends, within my days I've suffered from my husband's
 kin
 But when I fled from Bhambhōr, lo ! my grief was changed into
 joy
 From me was woe's dark curtain drawn and I mine own loved one
 became
 Sasuī's female grace is fled and she herself is Punhūn now

In such like oneness, saith the Sayid, protection is for lovers found
 The shelter of Bhambhōr's abode for loving hearts is near at hand
 I'll struggle on across the hills If I return, 'twill be my shame
 I am but the Balūch's slave I shall not claim the marriage tie
 To separate is worse than death I shall not here myself remain
 Hope I'll not yield Alive may I behold the camelman and die
 'Tis not in things that I, poor wretch, without the camelman should
 live

And his companions are gone, they climbed on camels, rode away
 Where Punhūn halted on his road, mine eyes weep tears to see the
 place

'Thy love is in thy lap' then why from travellers dost thou make
 thy quest ?

'Thy love's within thee' Seest thou not ?' This saying ponder well
 and know

She never sought the public place to ask where her loved one might
 be

'Thy love is in thy lap' why askest thou like this for sign of him ?
 'Nearer than vein of neck is he' Thine own is with thy very self
 For self is bound with self indeed to those in love true self is
 near

O sisters, such I did not know Unwitting marriage-tie I bound,
 Else less, assuredly, had been the suffering that the hillman caused
 For tawdry pleasure I entwined my life within the camelman's

XVII

Sasui

O tyrant Mountain, heap no dread on hapless girls

Sayid

The world respects thee, Sasui, saith Latif

Sasui

My powerful lord, kill not thy wretch with holy words
 For God, All-Knower, be at peace with wanderers
 Leave her not lonely, Hôt, who through thee won a boon
 O tyrant Mountain, 'gainst thine equals work thy dread
 Why dost thou deal thus harshly with thine hamlet's slave ?
 Come back, my hero, for in me no strength resides
 Set foot on mountain, softer be thy foot than silk

Sayid

Sad though her plight, towards her Punhūn went the slave
 So go she and return with him with whom she's bound

XVIII

Who go to Windar, let them gird their loins
 But why should they, their girdles who unbind ?
 It is not while we sit, our loved ones come
 Well may they weep whose loved ones wander far
 Sasuī suffers torture, gnawed with grief
 No word she uttereth but secretly
 She seeks for traces of her well-beloved
 If love's fire is a-kindling, kindle it
 And fan it till its flames shall reach the skies
 Forget the very stuff existence is,
 In non-existence place it all away

XIX

Sasuī

Strengthless, feeble, weak, without a guide,
 I shed tears for my husband From mine heart
 I pour love's tears forth Yet though weak I be
 I strive to make my peace with Punhūn Love,
 I'll grind the corn and bake it only thou
 But take me with thee so I be with thee

Sayid

When Azrad came and woke the sleeping girl,
 Sasuī fancied ' Punhūn sent this man '
 When Munkar and Nakīr she saw, she asked
 For news of Punhūn thus ' Oh brothers, say,
 Did any party of my friends pass by from here ? '

XX

She sate her down no step could she advance,
 She cried ' Come, Āryānī worn am I
 And deep in love with thee Towards thy side
 I creep Where Punhūn is, I'll go alone,
 Glad in my hillsman I'll delight my heart
 O'er mountain wandering, wandering, somehow thus
 I'll find my need assuaged Oh, fool am I !
 With me abides the pain that comes of friends '
 Her heart discerned her lov'd one Overborne
 Not thus she rested Nay, so saith Latīf,
 She scorns the pass and enters stony gorge
 The lovestruck Sasuī to honour rose

XXI

'Come near, Beloved, go not far away'
 Outworn she raised aloft her arms and cried
 Amidst the desert waste 'My cries of grief,
 Will kill me, Loved One, come thou back to me
 Come near, Beloved, go not far away
 Return Mid mountains, Giver of Life, I die
 O Punhūn, Friend of mine, desert me not
 While forward on my feet I make my way
 O Ārī, Husband, for the sake of God
 Forget not me My living core remembers
 In heaving sighs My joints are paining and
 My bones a-boil for my beloved Friend
 In very sleep indeed love's pain no rest
 Vouchsafes I summon pains that murder men'
 Not such is Sasuī as tremble they
 Who see the pass For she hath learnt the way
 That is betrodde of Khāhōrīs' feet

XXII

Misfortune slays me Seize the reins Alack!
 Drive not the camel off Come, visit me
 Lowly within mine hut, O Husband, Friend
 Without thee I have seen the judgement day
 Bad hap they brought me, camels, spouse's kin
 And hills Yet joy I counted them in hope
 I'd join my love When, Sasuī, during day
 Thou sawest alien beasts within the yard
 Thou should'st have held them till the evening time
 With chains of thy head's hair hadst thou them bound,
 They had not filched Punhūn thy love away
 Thou sawest alien beasts within the yard
 With thy head's hair thou didst not fasten them,
 Oh why? Thou wouldst not then have undergone
 The grievous torture of the mountain-pass
 The camels used to grunt But this one time
 For me was nought but silence not a word
 The drivers uttered saddling up the beasts
 To drive them off, some secret bargain made,
 This man with that No! No! not wicked were

My husband's kin But only let my fate
 Be fair What evil lies in camelkind
 And keepers ? O what luckless girl is she
 Who finds herself athwart the will of God ?
 The camelmen were strangers from the start,
 No friends of wretched me My husband's kin
 Bore me ill-will I smiled and welcomed them
 By morning's tally camels none I found
 Where camels rest 'Ware camelmen they're come
 Or coming Punhūn they will take away,
 Breathing no breath, and set their course for home

XXIII

Sasui

Drive not the camels off for Allāh's sake,
 O camelmen Ye friends adored, sustain
 This bruised heart Burst not my loved one's bond
 Drive not the camels off for Allāh's sake
 In haste, O drivers Take thy slave beside'
 Let her clutch the camel's hair Love's memory
 Effects the ruin of my soul within
 In deep dishonour shall I plunge my race
 If from the men of Kēch I turn aside

Sayid

Love set her wandering o'er the desert waste
 What else fills happy girl with such desires ?
 In grief for husband's kindred midst the hills
 She did much journeying Had her spouse returned,
 Her luckless journeyings would have found her grace

XXIV

Ah womenfolk ! beside the washerman in vain
 My time I spent, which hap hath me undone,
 Burning me up with griefs Heaven willed that I
 Contract a marriage bond with passing folk,
 A woman luckless, left without her kin !
 In hundreds with the caravans there go
 Workmen and weavers yet this beggar me,
 Creature of little worth, (so sings Latīf),
 God, bring me past the Thōris' watering place
 I have no strength on thy bark let me cross

XXV

Sayid

The Friend helps them whose panniers are not full
 In happy throng hillmidst will Punhūn come
 And in a twinkling gladdened the soul will be
 Thus saith Latīf

Sasui

Full many hills, men say,
 Stand where Ārichas are T'wards Hārḥō's hill
 Lifting my hands, let me the mountains join
 'Twas yesterday the Kēchīs went Today
 I roam the hills counting, as they were clouds,
 Kāmbhō and Kārō hills The hill of Pubb
 By early morning I shall leave behind
 Now must I go nor shall I rest between

XXVI

Sayid

The hills are harsh, the dust is great,
 The paths are all o'erlaid with sand
 The passes hinder, saith Latīf,
 And fierce, they say, the deserts stand
 Her, worn by journey stages, Lord,
 Bring safe within the Kēchīs' land

Sasui

By love o'ercome I fell asleep
 Love brought no respite to my frame
 I sank to slumber keeping watch
 For those I loved But when they came
 I woke not, sisters I was wrong
 To make of love and sleep the same

He is a jewel, this my kin
 In darkness he is as the light
 When on the reckoning day they count
 He will not let me from his sight
 He'll call me and remember me,
 My hills man, Lord of Kēch-land's right

XXVII

So much with Punhūn is my love entwined,
 To live in beauteous Bhambhōr is for me
 As poison Urge no coming back, mine aunts
 My life, O friends, is given in trust to Hōt
 The stricken one some indication had
 The wretched girl is strengthless, nor can slave
 Without thy hand, Hōt, follow any path
 Show her some sign her muddled sense may grasp
 Sometime in mercy speak me fair, Belov'd
 My love for me my body hath undone
 Hands' work is poison, sleep to eyes forbid
 I cannot wait an instant, Friend, whilst thou
 In Windar taste the joys of happiness
 When to the hills there Punhūn's fragrance came
 The trees breathed forth Ārīchas' redolence
 The wishes, mother, of my heart come true
 There hath arrived in Kēch the Perfect One

XXVIII

Sayid

Those girls are false who tired while journeying
 Towards the Friend, the Punhūn whom they loved
 But they who suffered trouble for their love
 Find stone as soft as silk and happy are
 All they who're bruised and broken in the quest.
 O Brahman girl, let flesh be cut as meat
 The Kēch dogs raven and devour what's cut
 All girls, go naked put no clothing on
 Lo first of all the throng is she who ploughs
 Her way lighthanded Who bedecked yourself
 With neat hair-parting ruined union's joy
 She who like Lilan loved the jewel's appeal
 Was scorched with burning They who nothing bore
 Crossed Hārhhō's hill, and seeking love they came
 Beside the village of their heart's desire
 Kēch sent its summoning call to them who went
 But carried nothing underneath their arms

XXIX

My bosom friends have gone away
To whom shall I my sorrow tell ?
With shame as burden (saith Latif)
I roam amongst the passes Who
A traveller is for me to ask ?
Let me sit down that there may come
Into mine hand what I desire
Let thorns in thousands pierce my feet
Let big with little toe not join
Let feet be torn upon the rocks
Nay when I go towards my love
I'll put on no such thing as shoe
They'll put on shoes who count their feet
As they would friends For her love's sake
Sasūi put her shoes away

XXX

By dying live that thou mayst feel
The beauty of Beloved Thou
Wilt surely do the righteous thing
If thou wilt follow this advice
Die, that thou prosper Sit not down,
O woman, live and after death
Thou wilt unto thy Punhūn come
They who so died before their death
By death are not in death subdued
Assuredly they live who lived
Before their life of living was
Who lived before their living was
From age to age will live for aye
They will not die again who died
Before the dying came to them
Thou didst not know thy death was there,
In quiet questing for thy love
Thou didst not hear, O woman, this
' Die why dost thou behead thyself ? '

XXXI

Sayid

Use feet and hands and knees, go on
 Go forward earnestly that thou
 Bring to its crown Lord Ārī's love
 As long as life lasts, let none else
 The equal of thy Punhūn be
 Use feet and hands and knees, trudge on
 With all the strength thine head command
 Fond girl to give up news of him
 Thou lovest ¹ For the spark of love,
 O Sasuī, is thy passport's aid
 Let there be Hōts in thousands, yet
 Make none of them thy Punhūn's peer
 The wretched girl laid on herself
 The task of searching for her love
 Her body which with anguish sore
 Was tortured, suffered pains of fire
 Her fate, foredoomed ere that, was writ
 So later came the trudgings-on
 Great was the distance could a shriek
 Be heard across it ?

Sasuī

If I cry

The folk will say that I am mad
 Well, let them say it, if they hear,
 They only hear the cry I raise
 Yes, let them come and give reproach
 What will reproaches do to me ?
 If I speed onwards I shall be
 In pieces broken when I fare
 Upon the tracks my love has made

XXXII

Sasuī

Restrain myself howe'er I try,
 I cannot stay unless I see
 Beloved's face Unbounded grief
 Without my love assaileth me
 Avaunt, tomorrow I'll not bide
 By promise that tomorrow tells
 I cannot wait tomorrow's day
 Or meet me, love, or kill me, else
 Bring union to a wretched girl,

Or kill her only show her eyes
The Friend she loves

Sayid

Sad soul, dismiss

Thy sorrow from thy memories
Away with thy luxurious couch,
O Sasuī girl Out o'er the ground
Seek, to the finding, Ārī's feet
Lo! curses fall on hills around,
The curses of the hapless one
When she is dead, the deserts through,
The deer with constant wailing say
'She who is dead hath killed us too'
Afflicted one, thy famine stays
Though there may fall the showering rain
The Lord hath plenty in his hands
In raising hands to Him there's gain

XXXIII

Sasuī

I did not meet my love although
An hundred suns to setting sped
O let me yield my life when I
Have seen him, hence my journey made
I have not met my love but thou
Art sinking to thy rest, O Sun
The messages I give thee, take
And tell to my beloved one
To Kēch go, say 'The sad one died
Upon the path' 'Twas not for me
To meet my love death supervened
I'll die, be nothing utterly
In separation from my love

Sayid

She will become the vultures' food,
Upon the trees, for all her speed
For her love's sake Sasuī stood
Her life upon the gallows tree
There wild beasts are her flesh is here
She kept back nought, the wretched one
Within the wastes a cry comes sheer,
And mournful sound of wailing crane
A shriek within the eddy rings
It is the cry of lover's pain

XXXIV

Sayid

With set of sun the lateness came
 On mountain fell her gaze
 With sorrows she was furnished ,
 On Wankār's block she laid her head,
 Victim of evil days

Sasui

Sink not, O sun, nor make it late
 For those o'ercome with woe
 Hill, if I see Balūchī tracks,
 No matter if life go

Out and away Balūch hath sped
 By me can aught be done
 Now ? I shall haste across the waste
 As soon as sets the sun

Across the stones how many steps
 Must I take roaming on ?
 Girl friends, it was with griefs alone
 Relationship I won
 Let none come with me , only waste,
 They say, lies on and on

No water there, the distance great
 Before me, desert, sand
 Cursing Punhūn's name let none
 Of thirst die in that land.

XXXV

Sasui

O mother, love's consuming fire assails me from my love
 In part 'tis love's internal flame, part heat of day above
 I go and going hesitate amidst the double burning-fire
 High o'er my head for the Balūch the flames of conflagration rise.
 And yet thou tauntest me because the truth is hidden from thine
 eyes
 Return, my mother, that I may tell thee the language of my woe.
 My love forgotten, verily for me the parching winds may blow ,
 And I may perish in the waste as doth the desert lark expire

O mother, from the spinning seat remove the spinning wheel
 away
 That man of hills for whom I spun went home to Kēch nor did
 he stay
 Card not the ball of cotton now if, mother, thou for me dost
 care
 Kick down the wheel and cast the cotton-ends upon the water's
 face
 That man of hills for whom I spun went home to Kēch, which is
 his place
 Card not the ball of cotton now if, mother, thou dost care for
 me
 Love struck me down Get cotton spun and pay for it the
 spinning fee
 The wheel and cotton, spinning seat, O girls, banish anywhere

The man I loved, who is my life, has gone and brought me
 sorrow's pain
 In spinning-place they say to me 'Spin' Though the strands
 I pull and strain,
 No thread emergeth But the wheel to stain with tears hath
 been my lot,
 With tears of blood

Sayid

The Brahman girl pulled forth the thread of

faring long
 Some ancient love she must have had to bind her to Balūchī
 throng
 As night to dripping fullness swelled, she pulled and gathered
 journey's thread
 Poor one, whate'er her thinking was, to camelmen for her 'twas
 wed
 She sallied forth and paid no scot, nor had the day become then
 hot

Ere that could be, she burst the ties that bound her to the
 spinning girls
 Burn while thou livest, there's no place except for fire that in
 thee swirls
 In cold, in heat go on, go on there is no time to stay and rest
 Drive on the camel while 'tis light,
 Lest darkness fall and thou not sight
 The tracks of them thou lovest best

XXXVI

While I went wandering on this thought of the Balūchīs came to me
 Bhambhōr I'll leave ? My mind knows no enjoyment here It
 only Hōt
 Had heard the cries I raised outside Bhambhōr, not then mayhap
 indeed
 Would he have slipped away from me. Flee Bhambhōr, sisters,
 and you will
 Be saved Ere this, my sisters, I have suffered sorrow in this place.
 In this Bhambhōr it is, O friends, a wounded life I spend To them
 Who went upon their journey memory clings And how can I
 forget
 Them who set off away from me ? My bodice on my shoulder's
 torn
 My head is bare What is my business, sisters, in this Bhambhōr
 town ?
 All Bhambhōr was mistaken No one went from it to follow Hōt
 The town had not the sense to know the matchless lord's, mine Ārī's
 worth
 For them who saw with inward heart the bridegroom donned the
 marriage-crown
 'Twas they who saw with inward heart who after him went on their
 way
 They too were toiling after him who Punhūn did not take with
 them

XXXVII

Sas ī

Had I been the Balūchīs' slave, they had not left me the prey
 Or sorrow a sorrowful one, of that there is not a doubt
 O sisters, had I but been bone of Ārīchas' bone,
 The men of the hills would have called me at loading of caravan
 Had I had true marriage bond, reproaches I could have poured
 On the heads of my husband's kin But out of my humble state
 I uttered never a word Mother, my caste is a slur
 In the minds of the men of Kēch

Sayid

If she keep not her eyes awake

With the caravans, what then ? Is it after that she should weep ?
 This way of thine was a pitiful way, when the travellers went
 Thou didst sleep

Sasui

I call to my friends But they do not answer my cries
 Ah luckless me! at my place the tongues of the camels were dumb
 So great misfortunes occurred to me in this evil Bhambhōr

XXXVIII

O mother, by travellers' fault I suffered such pang of love
 All unexpectedly came my knowledge of them to me
 Mother, don't hold me back My friends have wounded my heart
 How with the alien folk wast thou tangled, kirtle and hem ?
 Thy sense went all awry when thou made'st of the man of the hills
 Thy spouse, O Sasui Play didst thou think the Balūchī's love,
 Vagabond Brahman girl ? By love I am looted and robbed
 Distance hath fallen between me and the union of love
 My friends when they met me healed the wounds that wounded
 my soul

XXXIX

Sasui

Mother, my hopes have found their crown
 The Balūch are come to Bhambhōr town
 Some one from Punhūn I saw mine eyes
 Grew cool to their veriest uttermost ends,
 As the nail to finger tip extends
 My griefs I forgot to see joys' tree
 In a branching fullness rise

Sayid

A child of woe, she was shown by woe
 Love's pitiful path and how to go
 For union with Hōt For such journeying
 Sorrows pointed the way For some folk see
 That in sorrows there can an immense thing be
 Tie up thy cash in thy garment With grief
 Do thy bargain and trafficking

Sasui

Grief, shake me not for my strength is frail
 As salt in water, my life doth fail
 Sorrows' flood abateth nought, never at all
 Today flow the Persian wheels full course
 With more than yesterday's water-force
 Sorrows know no rule With a shattering power
 Their sudden terrors fall

Deeper than depth are my love-sprung woes
 Friends who honoured me stand and oppose
 Fine scope had my sorrows Of their own move
 They came and settled To whom impart
 The inmost promptings of my heart ?
 Lo ! Lo ! In my mind I am pierced through
 With the pointed arrow of love

Mother, restrain me not for the dart
 The Balūch cast forth hath smitten my heart
 Weeping, the Kēchward land I'll stain
 With blood For me will the crow ever sing,
 Mother, glad notes of welcoming ?
 Those women have verily gone from the land
 Who were o'erborne with pain

Whom now shall I ask of Beloved's sojourn ?
 While afflicted ones meet not, 'tis futile to mourn
 Some wring their hands aimlessly true mourners wail
 How shall I share out, friends, the woe
 That can be shared ? Do others know ?
 They have their loved ones in front of them,
 And grief cannot assail

Sayid

Gird up thy loins, O suffering one,
 This time, all times For Kēch is far
 Let death not find thee journeygone
 And held where mountain-passes are

XL

Who after their Beloved ask, will always their Beloved see
 And they who search are who behold the courtyard of Beloved's
 home
 Enquire, go on else hadst thou not for thy Beloved query made
 The girls who search are from their Friend assuredly not far away
 May I in searching find thee not nor may thy body meet with
 mine,
 That go there not from me the urge that moveth every single hair
 Whoso like me with the Balūch made kindred bond, hath set her
 flesh

On beds of spikes and from her eyes the tears that are of blood spurt
forth

Whoso like me tells the Balūch the secret promptings of her heart
Will never cease to lave her cheeks with falling, ever falling, tears

XLI

The spinning-seat they passed and went What is an humble one
to do ?

Now this must be her task, with fire to set this Bhambhōr town
alight

The spinning-seat they passed and went Speed o'er the tracks the
camels sped

Rest not in Bhambhōr, lady, thou wilt thus thyself then catch
him up

In sand delight lives Fare thou forth that thou mayst be with
Hōt, thy love

Of knowledge and of full intent deserting me they went away
O sister, how can I give up that Āriyānī man I love ?

I filled the jars with water gain was none therefrom to men of
Kēch

XLII

Sayid

What wilt thou do by weeping ? Comes now any Friend back
here to thee ?

Sasui

How great the cruel deeds, O girls, that kindred folk have
wreaked on me

I do adjure you thus let none towards me act with treachery

If wretched girl is killed, then fear from her will vanish utterly

O friends from Kēch, with you-sprung woes how comes it still
that life I see ?

I do not live I am not dead but, Love, yield life remembering
thee

Or soon or late I'll die but grant upon the way that my death be

O girls, I hope that there may fall on my Beloved blood of me

Sayid

Yielding her life to camelmen, to Punhūn's hinds called Sasui,
Lest any man in Kēch should treat her Bhambhōr town ungrate-
fully

XLIII

Cease not calling Utter cries on cries
 Lest memory of thee fade
 Amongst the camelcade
 Thou sittest idling ! Dost thou ask thus wise ,
 ' What of the travellers ? whither journey made ? '
 Oh ! By what way aright wilt thou with Hôt unite ?

 Thou sittest idling ? Such is not love's way
 Break all the bonds that tied
 Thee fast to Bhambhôr side
 The neighbours know not sad night turned to day
 By thought of the Balûchîs' tried
 The Brahman girl a wound of grievous sorrow found

 Here Sasuî was there sorrows were The two
 Went off together mourning
 ' O men of Kêch, returning
 Come somehow to this wretch whom woes subdue
 I am your slave without the food of earning
 To me sad stricken, come, hillsman, bring comfort home '

XLIV

Sayid

The eaters of the wild grass seed
 Said to her ' Kêch is far away '
 The more she thought of it, the more
 Her hastening pace she hurried on

Sasuî

Thou didst not treat the men of Kêch
 As it was meet to treat them Short
 Thy paces were no lengthening
 Of strides thou madest after them

Sayid

Some rain it rained of Ārî's love
 That fell on her Nor would that love
 Pass dumbly from her countenance
 The lord of Kêch pallbearer is

Of Sasuî's head To see her love
 She fell o'ercome with weariness
 Across the passes, saith Latîf,
 Her Ārîyānî carried her

By feet of humble one to lie,
 Such was the luck that Punhūn won
Sasui

No kindred bond, nor any tie
 Binds me to the Balūch In caste

I am not suited, base and mean
 Let news of this not come to Kēch,
 Lest publicly be Punhūn shamed
 Their business done the Kēchīs went,

Deserting me Thou, God, art there
 I had ill-treatment from my friends

XLV

If ye with your eyes had seen the Balūch
 As I did behold my friend,
 Ye would have said to me 'Search' and gone
 Yourselves amongst the hills
 If women had met, as I have met,
 Punhūn, the Friend Beloved,
 They had put their mouths to their arms and cried
 Of a sooth in the desert waste
 Cease not from wailing 'Ah woe! Ah woe!'
 Lest thou lose the memory of woe
 No open-shed tears of water weep
 On the path weep tears of blood
 Patience, a mighty virtue thou art
 Cause me to join my Friend
 The more that the world restraineth, the more
 Is there lesson of meaning to me
 The rout of mankind in pleasure is sunk
 And talketh with gay unconcern
 Cross o'er the people while they are asleep
 Press, press on behind thy love
 Search for thine Āryānī and go
 The bounds of Bhambhōr outside
 I am lost on my wandering path but the rest
 Are safe in the company
 Like me, she will meet with a tragedy
 Who mentions the name of love
 No women are there to weep, nor folk
 To chant responses of woe
 The sorrows I have are my sorrows alone
 They are bringing me to my death

XLVI

Sasui

Love's pains, mid wastes where friends abide,
 To me the Perfect Hillsman showed
 Balūch are many, others but
 Āriyāni is my sheltering hut
 Within my mind I chose my love
 With all the means that senses move
 Of girl who is to Windar sold
 Shall her returning scarce be told
 The girl who Bridegroom seeking is,
 Folk call her lost in lunacies
 They who ungirt to meeting-place
 Without their love went, found the trace
 Of him and saw him with their eyes
 Before my gaze did camels rise
 O ! that there be Balūchīs too ,
 Let cataract else mine eyes subdue
 They saw their love ? Then may they not
 Return Returning is a blot
 The helpless creatures' pride is meet
 To die by tracks of loved one's feet
 Within the passes to be tossed
 Were better Bhambhōr's joys be lost !
 The cowries which you offered me
 Have, mother, useless proved to be
 To the Balūch mine heart afire
 Hath bound with bonds my hot desire
 She hath towards Balūchī tribe
 Such hot desire that should they jibe
 And say ' Avaunt and perish ', she
 Doth answer people, ' willingly '
 A welcome thing it was for me
 That my relationship should be
 With the Balūch, whom I pursued
 And Kēch's land thus, seeking, viewed
 Will any woman, sister, come ?
 I count the hills my kindred-home
 The henna of Malīr shall I
 Unto this body, mine, apply
 I'll go to Windar there shall be
 Lord Ārī's shelter found for me

Once such was I, at my command
 My clothes were washed by Punhūn's hand
 Now am I such that camel men
 Take me not with them Sorrow's pain
 Hath fostered me and futile thought
 To me life's nourishment hath brought

Sayid

Her lot was not, the Sayid says,
 In happy joys to pass her days

Sasui

I was, (perhaps 'twas fated so)
 A joint upon the stem of woe
 All have their sorrows, hand, full hand
 But sorrows stay with me and stand
 I carry loads of sorrow on
 Joys have deserted me and gone
 The hillsman makes me cross the plains
 With toilsome journey's racking pains
 He makes me other countries see
 Which ne'er before were seen by me
 My dress on shoulder's torn, and bare
 Mine head O sister, what is there
 In this Bhambhōr for me to do ?
 O Mother, out of Bhambhōr go
 And speed me kindly on my way
 No pleasure is there like to stay
 When we twain meet next, I with thee

Sayid

O burnt-up soul, in death's own fee
 Thou didst with Punhūn love contract
 Thine happy life, of joy compact,
 Thou castest knowing on the flame
 The men who with Beloved came
 Have done thee, Sasui, great harm
 Oh ! shake thy heart not with alarm
 Midst happiness thy joy will fall
 Thine hillsman, as for battle's call,
 Hath ranged himself and joyous come
 Without her lord Bhambhōr's no home
 For her, forgotten by the road
 When cameldrivers laid the load
 Upon the camels Lord Most High,
 Rein in towards her Come Thou nigh

II SUHINĪ AND MĒHĀR

The Story

Suhinī was the daughter of a well-to-do potter who lived by the bank of the river Izzat Bēg, the son of a rich Moghul merchant, chanced to come that way and was struck by the beauty of Suhinī. He fell in love with her at sight. Every day he came to purchase pots just for the hope of meeting Suhinī who returned his love. Spending all his money buying pots, Izzat Bēg became penniless and asked to be employed by Suhinī's father. He was engaged as a cattleman to look after the potter's buffaloes. He then changed his name from Izzat Bēg to Mēhār, or The Herdsman. The love of Suhinī and Mēhār continued to grow. But this did not please Suhinī's parents, who forbade further meetings of the lovers. To clinch matters they married Suhinī to another potter's son named Dām. They drove Mēhār away. Mēhār however continued to herd buffaloes and used to graze them on the other side of the river. Every night Suhinī crossed the river on a baked earthenware pot. Her parents remonstrated with her and in order to dissuade her from further meetings with Mēhār they took away the baked pot and substituted for it an unbaked one. They thought by this device that she would never dare to trust herself to the water on so fragile a vessel. But when night came Suhinī launched herself upon the river on the pot and was drowned when the water caused it to disintegrate. The poems of 'Suhinī and Mēhār' describe the passionate longing of Suhinī to seek her lover across the water, and her death in the rushing current. Mēhār who had heard her screams when the pot collapsed, rushed into the river to rescue her, but was drowned like the girl he loved. Mēhār is called fondly "Sāhīr" (The Helper) by Suhinī.

I

Upon the river's border women stand and cry,
'Oh, Sāhīr, Sāhīr' While the thoughts of some of them
Are on a private grief concentrated, others say
'We take no reck of life' and plunge within the flood
Sāhīr indeed is theirs who risked and entered in

E'en such an one is Suhinī who did put her hand
Upon the pot of clay and let the water flow
All o'er her arms, and luckless midst the stream did cry
Aloud to Sāhīr 'Love my love, return to me
For I am envy's target for the envious ones'

The water-herons rested on the trees the time
 For Muslim's middle prayer had passed Thereafter she
 Did take the pot and enter on the flood whenas
 She heard the cry that calls to evening prayer, and scanned
 To find the place where Sāhīr well-belov'd might bide

Thus Suhinī spake ' By earthen jar did I behold
 My herdsman's visage How shall I destroy the jar
 On which my life doth hang ? If it be broken, then,
 Of sooth, 'tis vanished Still, in hope not faithless be '
 ' Of Allāh's mercy do thou not despair ', thus runs
 The saying Make of it thy raft on which to float
 Then, with the joy that fills the hearts of those who love
 The Lord, thou mayst behold the herdsman's countenance

When jar was broken and when life was sped and means
 Of life's safe-conduct vanished, Suhinī's ears did ring
 With cries of the loved herdsman of the buffaloes
 ' Come not across of thy self-ferrying forget
 The ways of safety, Suhinī Love himself will take
 Thee o'er the rough and tumble of the troubled waves
 They quickly cross deep waters who have love to do
 The piloting Come not across self-ferrying
 Set forth without conveyance, dash the unbaked jar
 To earth in fragments Take love's yearning on the deep
 The herdsman seeks for news of them who seek for him
 For them a raft's a burden who have boundless love '

II

The terror and the tumult rage within the flood
 Where powerful crocodiles do congregate themselves
 By thousands numbered, dreadful, and beyond all tale
 My body, Sāhīr, is too frail to counter them
 Without thou help me Come to me within the stream,
 O thou, who art for me the lord most merciful

The terror and the tumult rage within the flood
 Where eddies gurgle This too feeble heart of mine
 Is weak to face the threatening wavelash Sāhīr, hear,
 O master mine, the plaint of her who begs of thee

The terror and the tumult rage within the flood
 Where din resoundeth May the herdsman hear my cries
 If Sāhir hear, I shall not die from buffeting of waves

The terror and the tumult rage within the flood
 Where monsters shelter and where brutes of prey do cry
 And turn them hither thither Ships in the abyss
 Have been engulfed whole till not a trace of wreck
 Nor any timber showeth the catastrophe
 The whirling waters hold some power of dread for ships
 Depart thence and return not Sāhir, take thou them
 Who have no skill of swimming, to that farther shore

III

Sayid

The sloping bank, whence Suhinī sought the water's way,
 Gave not good entrance , yet proved good to her who went
 In safety where the whirlpools harmed her not at all,
 While love of her beloved shone within her eyes
 Of right her rights she won who went in search of them

She sought, e'en beauty's self, her rights till fate's sad end
 She had no help of sailor nor of boat , no rope
 She tied, but crossed the current on an earthen jar
 Whereon she sate with water reaching to the calf full high

Learn well the lesson, Suhinī, of the hidden Law,
 How by the mystic way the Truth of Justice speeds
 True knowledge is in sooth the joy to them who love

Her eager spirit daily Dām would seek to quell
 With constant chiding Yet amidst the torrent's flow
 She turned not shorewards, keeping true her promise made

No flood of waters might hold Suhinī back For her
 An ocean's crossing was no weightier than a step that's ta'en
 Well may that mother smile who bore to life a girl
 So sadly fated, saying 'Suhinī, if thou seest
 Love's longing, surely thou wilt bring that love to thee'

Suhni

O log that floatest, be my friend, and I'll unfold
 My inmost thoughts, e'en how without there water be
 The rainy Sānwan like dry winter I would count,
 And hold Beloved's river but as meadow-land
 For it is right that they should cross the water flood,
 If those they love are standing on the farther shore
 O channel, would thou flowed not, with the land between
 The runnels dried to firmness In thy bed I'd see
 The saltwort flourish and the lūt and līār grow
 Yea! In the bed of thee who all thy life hast drowned
 The women who have hoped to reach thy farther bank

IV

O sisters! how the tinkling bell
 Has set my limbs to sprightly dance
 To stranger-folk how may I tell
 The love that doth my heart entrance?

With arrow that hath pierced my heart
 My herdsman lover sends me joy
 The bells that make my senses start
 In gladness do my soul employ

At midnight's hour I did uprise
 That I might my beloved see
 I slept, but shook sleep from mine eyes
 When the bell tinklings came to me

My quickened pulses livelier beat
 As on his memory mind did rest
 'How will he treat me when we meet?'
 So sought the heart within my breast

My thoughts are always with my love
 While life still holds me and may they
 Whose molten hearts in mine do move
 Be sundered from me ne'er away

I slept and heard the sounds of bells
 That tinkled on the farther strand
 They moved my heart Delight now dwells
 Within me for this gladsome land

By Allāh's favour came to me
 Beloved's fragrance in this place
 Lo ! I will go that I may see
 The much loved herdsman face to face

I slept and heard the sound of bells
 Vibrating on the farther shore
 My heart the herdsman's message tells
 And sets my nerves a-tingle more

Oh ! It is right that I should go
 Where my beloved rests his head
 That herdsman die ? Ah, no ! Ah, no !
 Nor empty be his cattle stead

Young buffaloes he guardeth, oh !
 May harm reach not one hair of his
 He is mine ornament, although
 Men may revile with calumnies

V

Sayid

All, all is water and the distant bank afar
 With love's deep thrill did Suhmī risk her life
 To enter in Her heart had cognizance of sin
 To set her trembling there amidst the watery waste
 If mercy meet thee, eddies matter not at all
 Have others entered and have won their way across ?
 So wilt thou likewise Leap within the raging flood,
 Prepare thy goatskin that the herdsman thou mayst meet
 Where will and heart surge, currents run in strict accord
 And pour by swiftly in a roaring rushing stream
 ' O mayst thou compass midst the waves that herdsman's tryst '
 Thus hath Latīf the Poet spoken in his verse

Suhinī

'I try to check the noble urgings of my love
But stay they will not Sacrificing then my life
I'll enter and I'll make the passage of the flood
Whose thoughts are on the herdsman they are right to go'

Sayid

Could fame of Suhinī e'er been heard, if in the stream
She had not entered ? Here perchance but short her span
Of days had been The herdsman milked the buffalo
And with the sip of milk he gave her made her fey
Love, thus the Sayid says, undid her utterly
Death was her mankind's fate But she who drowned in death
Did by her drowning win a twofold recompense

Suhinī

'There looms the whirlpool Here stand I The wrath of Dām,
My husband, can I suffer ? Who would place her foot
Upon the waters did not Heaven decree the act ?
At time of early morning dawn my weird I dree
Sāhūr bound the knot that binds my life to me
May not that knot of Sāhūr's that is life be loosed
O God who Hearest, make me Sāhūr meet, that then
The knot of life may in fulfilment loosened be'

VI

Time was when God, the One and the Eternal, spake
Unto the souls and thundered 'Am I not your Lord ?'
Then, even then, to Suhinī had there come a love
And longing for the neatherd 'Twas of God's own will
That might of waters broke her earthen pot in twain
What fate God's will had fashioned for her there indeed
She brought to due fulfilment in this world below

VII

Suhinī

'My body burns With roasting fire
I am consumed but make my quest
Parched am I with Beloved's thirst,
Yet drinking find in drink no rest
Nay, did I drain the ocean wide
'Twould grant in not one sip a zest'

Sayid

The night is black the pot unbaked
 Month's days in final dark are shed
 No beam of moon, the waters roar
 For Sāhīr's sake has Suhinī sped
 At midnight there Through God alone
 Could thus the stream be entered

Suhinī

' The night is black, the jar unbaked,
 And (horror !) comes the falling rain
 Here trackless water lions there
 Are prowling, to safe life a bane
 Oh be my love not shattered when
 I enter counting life as vain '

VIII

Suhinī

Folk stand upon the distant bank and hail me, ' Come ! '
 But two-fold peril holds mine humble heart in check,
 The swift deep current and the jar unfired in kiln
 With whom the truth is, they, I know, will never drown
 For see the women who thus cross from shore to shore

Sayid

With help of Allāh then make thou of faith thy raft
 These women ne'er will perish who take Sāhīr's word
 Wise men do clutch at bushes when they're like to drown
 See (saith Latif) the virtue that resides in reeds
 Perchance they bring thee safely to the bank perchance
 They break and take thee with them down amidst the flood

IX

My heart of its hopes is shorn,
 No strength within me lies
 Come back to me now, my love,
 O Sāhīr, lordly and wise

Return to me, love most kind,
 I am foolish, ignorant, vain
 Of the peril that was with the jar
 Not an inkling stirred my brain

From the doom of the Merciful One
May man hope to free his head ?
Ensnared by my fate and love
I am caught in the toils and led

The women have mocked me all ,
' Where wilt thou, pray, alight ? '
Ocean, roaring in madness hear
The storying of my plight

Because of the taunts I swim,
I swim in the surge and cry
' Love holdeth thee ', (saith the Sayid)
Of a sooth in love let me die

From the water's midst can I turn ?
O'er there is my lord, my love
I die if I swim If I turn
Too strong will the current prove

Of Beloved within my heart
Full riches of thought appear.
The women around me I see
And I see my sin and I fear,

From the water's midst can I turn
With my lord on that farther brink ?
Beloved, I love thee so well,
As I swim, that the deeper I sink

Outside art thou of mine eyes,
Yet dwellest within my soul.
While I yearned for thee, love, my love,
The tide of the years did roll

Beloved, my love for thee,
Chafeth and cutteth my heart
Strong bonds that thy love hath bound
I cannot sunder apart.

Beloved, I yearn for thee
From that love doth my weakness cower
From the kiln of my worthless skin
Love mounteth in blazing power

The friends who have pierced me through
 Needed not the gimlet's bite
 From yearners the yearning take, O love,
 And the severed souls unite

For such is that strength of thine
 Who art both true and lord
 To her who maketh the body's quest
 Do thou thy mercy afford

Of the trysting when will the crow,
 Mother, glad notes give forth ?
 Time is old since I saw my friends
 How shall I judge their worth ?

I yearned Set a thousand suns
 Bereft the years did I spend
 (Though I cannot suffer a moment's loss)
 Of folk that I count as friend

I think not of home nor spouse
 Nought else my senses thrills
 But the herdsman alone for me
 The living moment fills

I deck my beauty betimes
 Hoping Beloved to see
 He dwelleth across the stream
 May he somehow appear to me !

X

Sayid

Away from Sāhīr Suhīnī is a thing unclean
 But by the side of him who drives the horned kine
 To purity she riseth She doth droop and fade
 From Sāhīr severed Fever hath set in upon
 Her girlish beauty Pity for her wretched state !
 She, maimed and unlovely in her illness now,
 Passeth time sighing, by affliction held away
 From Sāhīr By the neatherd health abides Near Dām,
 Her husband, she doth nought but illness know

A sight of Sāhīr's physic for the beauteous girl
 His face if she but see, she surely will get well
 The current, Suhinī, hath a wicked power today
 O enter not What business in the black of night
 Hast thou within the eddies ?

Suhinī

May not Dām awake
 And make his inquisition of the neighbouring folk !
 No matter , let him ask them ' What is Dām to do ? '
 (Thus Suhinī speaketh) They who are in need have work
 Within the eddies For my herdsman's sake I give
 These bones, this skin of mine, in willing sacrifice

Sayid

While she did live she would not wearied take her rest ,
 But entered earth's bosom longing for her friends
 She sat not silent while life pulsed her limbs, but dead
 She drifted on the waves towards the herdsman, dead

Suhinī

' The black of night is better Banish moonlight's moon '
 (Thus cried she) ' May I never face of other see
 Beside the neatherd's face '

Sayid

It was the ocean deep,
 No shallow creeklet drowned her, nor the swampy marsh
 Love for the neatherd filled her eyes in death indeed
 O listen to the message that in death she gave
 ' I gained no profit from the house of my sire's sire,
 Nor from the house of mother's sire But from my friends
 Great were the kindnesses that showered thence on me '

III MŌMUL AND RĀNŌ

The Story

Mōmul was the eldest daughter of a rich merchant living in a palace near the lake of Kāk. Her fame and wealth had won her many suitors. But most of these came to untimely ends. Undeterred by this, Rānō, a Sōdha Rājput who lived at Ludhō fifty miles from the lake of Kāk, made up his mind to win Mōmul. He was the vazir of Umar Sūmrō, the ruler of Umarkōt. Mōmul and Rānō found themselves in love with each other and were married. Rānō, however, had already a wife of his own and to keep the matter secret from his family he said nothing about his marriage to Mōmul. But every night he made the fifty mile journey from Ludhō to near Kāk to be with Mōmul, using for his journeying a very speedy camel which covered the distance easily. One night, however, he failed to arrive at Mōmul's palace at the regular time. Mōmul was very disconsolate and imagined that Rānō was proving unfaithful to her. To play a trick on her lover she dressed up one of her sisters in clothes like Rānō's and made her sleep with her on the same couch. Rānō arrived later that night and seeing the two figures on the couch together imagined that Mōmul had another lover. Rānō in utter disgust went away at once leaving his stick by the side of the couch so that Mōmul would recognize it. In the morning Mōmul saw the stick and realized the truth. She knew that her stratagem had recoiled on herself and that she had lost Rānō by her own foolishness. She besought him to listen to her explanation but Rānō refused to hear her. The poems of 'Mōmul and Rānō' describe her disillusionment, and her failure to obtain reconciliation with her lover. In the poem Rānō is called a Mindhro as well as a Sōdha. The Mindhros are a Sindhi tribe living in Lower Sind. Rānō is called Dhōlō (darling) by Mōmul in Shāh Abdul Latīf's verses and lives in Dhat, which appears to be another name for Ludhō.

I

Lo ! dawn has burnt the lamp of night
And set day's first streaks in the sky
Come back, O Mindhro prince, I pray
For Allāh's sake, come back I die
In search of you I sent the crows
Of Kāk upon their way to fly

I stood the constellations rose,
 And all the constellations set
 The camel and the Mīndhro prince
 Did all night long my memory fret
 Adown my cheeks the tears I shed
 Till branch in branch of sunlight met

There waned the Pleiades and waxed
 The three stars in Orion's belt
 The prince at night-time did not come
 Time passed away for night to melt
 In fiery pit without my love
 In Dhat stayed Dhōlō Grief I felt

Don't sulk Away with sulking Come,
 Make up our quarrel, nor go far
 The wound of separation smarts
 And brings some little pang to mar
 May my love guide me I'm come near
 You Find I gladness where you are

Kāk's waters boil The trees are gone,
 The painted halls with fire waste lard
 Without you, love, my heart has dread
 Forthwith make good your promise made
 If you came back, O Mīndhro love,
 A monstrous folly you displayed

Had you not been my husband, Spouse,
 Perhaps you'd roused me while I slept
 A little, and by morning known
 The truth the sleeping woman kept

II

I have no guardian, nor have I a spouse,
 No marriage bond, nor kin in marriage linked
 Without thee, loved one, dread hath come to me
 O travellers, blame the darling man of Dhat
 Come to the courtyard of the longing girls
 Be reconciled, beloved Thee away,
 One moment's time I cannot tolerate

Join me, O life of life, O sight of love,
 That pain may vanish Would that he come back,
 My darling Mindhro prince, from Ludhō town ,
 I'd sacrifice mine house and everything,
 Nay more, my life's existence, just for him
 Unless my Rānō in the kingdom is,
 I want no wealth I beg the Sōdha's love
 From him If he but come within mine house
 To be my guest, I'd take whate'er I know
 And cast it out upon the fire to burn
 I'd take my pride and throw it in the oven
 I'd sacrifice myself, with parents too,
 And house and all within it for my love
 The follies of mine action, love, I did
 Not realize My follies have come back
 To me, O Sōdha prince, to shame my face
 Thy patience hath a lesson been to me,
 To Mōmul For thine action yesterday
 Hath blotted out my vain stupidities
 Ungirt I was and Dhōhō covered me
 His little gift of silk he made as cloud
 Of Kāk to hide my nakedness Now he
 Hath raised me up to be anointed bride,
 And I am happy in my happiness
 Thy patience, Sōdha prince, an honour is
 To modest girls The nose of my disgrace
 Without a word, without a knife he cut
 Thy patience, Sōdha prince, a lesson is
 To everyone and now 'tis Mōmul's turn
 How do I know the things that came to pass ?
 O Sōdha prince, the girls were shamed who saw
 Their former shamelessness Within my fate
 Disgraces live Like blooms they blossomed and
 To bigness grew Their noses though I cut,
 Disgraced they go not What am I to do,
 O sisters, with these noseless, hideous things ?

III

Beloved, go not off to Dhat
 To leave me now in helplessness
 I'm bound by that once-word of thine
 I wept upon my swinging bed
 With memory in my heart for thee

Believe me, love, all places, things
To me are like as poison made
O Rānō, husband, know I not
The reason why thine anger rose
Upon the cots hath fallen dust
The couches have become outworn
The place is faded of Jabāt
The flowers are withered, thee, love, gone
The pillows that were kept are gray
With cream-hued dust To whom shall I
Without thee, gentle coaxings urge ?
Mindhro, come back forgive my sins
Thou bridegroom art of many girls
But art to me the only spouse
See, Rānō's cord within my soul
Is fastened As a boat is tied,
The Sōdha bound this life of mine
To poison idleness is turned
Awake I pour out flooding tears
Thy coming ever I await
O Rānō, thee may Allāh bring
Back to mine house My life's with thee,
O Sōdha, else within the land
Would many other princes be

IV

There came fresh message yester night
From Rānō Won is our behest
The Giver gave it, says Latīf
Of comer's caste why make inquest ?
Who came in coming welcomed were
Your master kept you just for this,
O camel, to be driven on,
Be not, the Sayid says, remiss
Descending Ludhō's sandy hills
You'll Mōmul meet Come night, day pass
Dear camel, with the Sōdha's help,
You'll feed on Kāk's rich verdant grass
So take the road Don't twist your neck
At any time from side to side
With turn of cheek, the Sayid says,
You'll feel a slap to cheek applied

Don't twist your neck from side to side
But take the road Today, next day,
Or soon or late, they'll lead you out,
Your coat with journey's dust o'erlay
The earth that stretches at my feet
Is that same earth where friends' feet stand
The brave are covered with the dust
We stood and saw this mid the sand
Man's life has but two days to tell
Rise, says Latīf, search, use them well.

IV LĪLAN AND CHANĒSAR

The Story

Kaunru was the daughter of a Hindu king and was very proud and domineering. Taunted by her friends that she could not win the heart of Chanēsar Dāsrō, a man of great royalty and distinction, she determined to prove that the taunt was undeserved. Gaining access to Chanēsar's palace she enlisted the help of his vazīr who, however, privily informed Chanēsar that Kaunru, merely to prove her power, wished to make a conquest of him. Chanēsar, thus warned by the vazīr, indignantly repelled Kaunru's advances. But the determined woman was not discouraged by the rebuff. She disguised herself as a servant girl, got herself employed in Chanēsar's palace and struck up acquaintance with Līlan, Chanēsar's wife. She then tempted Līlan by the offer of a magnificent diamond necklace worth nine lakhs of rupees. This she promised to give Līlan if Līlan would contrive to let her pass one night with Chanēsar. By a piece of cunning Līlan that night got Chanēsar driven to Kaunru's house. Being under the influence of liquor Chanēsar succumbed to Kaunru's charms. Kaunru's mother, who had helped her daughter in her duplicity, told Chanēsar next day that he would now have to treat Kaunru as his wife as Līlan had sold him to Kaunru for a diamond necklace. Chanēsar taxed Līlan with her disingenuous conduct and learnt from her of the trick she had played upon him. In anger he dismissed her from his sight and spurned her as a false wife. Despite her protestations Chanēsar refused to listen to her. The poems of 'Līlan and Chanēsar' are concerned with the disillusionment of Līlan when she finds that her trickery has recoiled on her own head and that she has lost her husband's love through her own folly.

I

Līlan

How comes it thus that thou dost spurn
The thought, Chanēsar, from thy mind
Of them whose vitals thou hast pierced,
O Dāsrō prince ? Speak comfort kind
Thou art my lord and I have need
Of thee O friend, expose me not
To people's scorn My husband, love,
Drive me not off I humble am

Thy love, O love, with blows it gives
 Hatn felled me to the ground. Thou art
 My one spouse ! thou hast many wives

O love, when thou hast made me speak
 Thou speak'st me in insulting strain
 Why is this so ? Beside thy feet
 I sit, I fidget, stand again.

Saj, d.

O fool, the trinket tricked thy sense
 To set thee boasting over there.
 Thy promise made, Chanēsar's love,
 Thy lord's, thou didst asunder tear.

The page once more is turned o'er.
 Disgrace's brand on thee is pressed.
 The trinket's tracery indeed
 Thy foolish mind hath quite obsessed.

Lilan.

The necklace I'll make sure to win,
 I told myself, and it will be
 A keepsake for me all my life.
 But Kannru's craft outwitted me.

Saj, d

O Lilan, stop thy tricks, good girl.
 Wrap round thy neck thy garment ' so
 Thyself ennumble. Then thy spouse
 On thy complaints will not say, ' Go '
 O Lilan, if on thy behest
 Thou gettest nothing, still beseech
 Cease not from hoping, for thy friend
 Hath plenteous mercy in his reach.

Weep, make complaint before thy lord
 And try to please him. Beg, request.
 Entreaty's place is there for thee.

L'ul.

Count no great virtues in my test
 It is as if I none such had.
 Show favour, spouse. Now comes my lot.
 Let not another girl coquet
 With Lord Chanēsar. When I thought,

With heart full deeply later on,
I knew the place for humble lives
Is here His anger quickly turns
The lucky into luckless wives

II

Līlan

With sins committed past all count,
O Dāsrō, to thy door I'm come
If thou to sulking art inclined,
My place is not within thy home
O Coverer, for the Lord, erase
The evil doing of my days
Perhaps these evil deeds of mine
The girls of mine own age did see
For all my friends of equal age,
Are making laughing-sport of me
On arm I did no armlet wear
My neck of necklaces was bare
Mine hair I did not comb nor put
Upon mine eyes antimony,
Nor deck myself For this alone
Mine husband sought me verily
The golden rings from mine ears hung
The necklace round my neck was strung
Mine arms a weight of armlets bore
My hair was done up beautifully
For this alone it was my lord
Relinquished all his thought of me

Sayid

O'erwhelmed in a vain conceit
The jewel she saw and was beguiled
Folk come and go and comment make,
That Līlan is a stupid child
As grass that withers, she was scorched
And parched by taunts when folk reviled
The beauty of her childhood's day
From her, the luckless one, resiled

III

Sayid

How smart you were indeed, I'm thinking !
 And to know so well a husband's wiles !
 You thought ' Oh ! I'll make myself look nicer
 If I put the necklace round my neck '
 When a faithless wife sets herself to deck,
 Let her use a hundred tricks and guiles
 She'll not please her lord for all her prinking

It's the wise man's job to read thoughts' meaning
 Dāsro's craft has her whims outread

Līlan

' I was clever enough amongst my people,
 And full of tricks in the midst of my friends
 But a need has come that compels and bends
 Me, so that I cannot lift my head
 It is something that goes beyond my weening

When I clumb on the couch I shall do my charming
 God is such the handmaidens please '

Sayid

To Chanēsar's mind there had come some inkling
 Already before the jewel-affair
 Līlan, in all your acts take care
 To your husband you're always a quarrel and tease
 That brings reproaches with bicker and harming

Līlan

How can I know what Chanēsar is thinking ?

Sayid

Don't fidget, O Līlan, so much but rise
 And put your courtyard to rights for your love
 Of sire, sire's sire make a sacrifice,
 Yourself in the selfsame offering linking

IV

Līlan

I was the senior of them all
 And girl friends in their throng would come
 And visit me within my house

But when I touched the ornament
 I lost the favour that I had
 I was cast out by my belov'd
 And branded with the failure's brand
 I used to lie on swinging cots
 And did not realize my luck
 To sheer destruction was I brought
 By necklace's catastrophe
 Sorrows met me face to face
 My husband took himself away

Sayid

A string of sorrows was the thing
 That thou didst for a necklace take
 Chanēsar looked the other way
 And made the serving-girl his friend

Līlan

O that my lord with none would bring
 The discord of dissension here !

V

Look on all the lucky wives
 All have necklets round their necks
 They preen themselves a hundred ways
 That love's beloved they may see
 Beloved the protector is
 Of wives who show humility

Look on all the lucky wives
 All have collars round their throats
 Beloved, whom they love, to see
 They strove with earnest effort's aim
 Beloved walks upon the path
 Of wives who show humility

Look on all the lucky wives
 All have jewels on their heads
 To hearts of all this thought has sped,
 ' Love will come inside my home '
 Love came within the homes of them
 Who, seeing self, with sight blushed red

VI

Sayid

O Līlan, don't expose your faults
 By quarrelling with Chanēsar
 You're always bickering with him,
 And, fool, yourself you've ruined
 Before that knowing husband, don't
 Expose your faults, my beauty
 Fool in your folly, there can be
 In wife no match for husband
 O Līlan, don't expose your faults
 By quarrels with lord Chanēsar

Līlan

He is no woman's husband, none,
 Not mine, nor your one either
 The darlings that he likes I've seen
 Lamenting at his doorway
 If I am muddled in my sense,
 Look to yourself, my friend, too
 Your way's to hide the many faults
 Of those who have astray gone
 Your merit, husband, love, is this
 You hide your wretches' failings

Sayid

O Līlan, don't expose your faults
 By quarrels with lord Chanēsar
 You thought him yours You didn't know
 The subtlety his mind has
 The woman Kaunru had her way,
 Possessed your Dāsrō husband

Līlan

O friend, I cannot bear the taunts
 You flung at me obliquely
 You've many wives, but as for me
 You are my only husband
 Come back Be kind and show your grace
 To them who're poor and wretched
 You've crowds and crowds of charming girls
 To fascinate you, husband
 Don't leave me, Dāsrō, else I lose
 My way and wander helpless
 I've wrapped my garment round my neck
 My fate's with you, Chanēsar

V MĀRŪĪ AND ŪMAR

The Story

Māruī was the daughter of a poor goatherd who lived in a brushwood village called Malīr. She was betrothed to a man of her own tribe of Mārūs, but a servant of her father's had fallen in love with her and was overcome with jealousy when he learnt that she had been betrothed to another. In a mad desire to revenge himself upon the Mārūs he went to Umar Sūmrō, the Chief of Umarkōt, and painted in glowing terms the beauty of Māruī. He suggested to him that Umar should carry her off by force for himself. This outrage Umar committed. He took her away with him clad as she was in her rough country blanket and shut her up in a two-storeyed building in Umarkōt. But she refused to let Umar come near her and said that if he did she would kill herself. Eventually she was forced to promise that if her relatives did not rescue her within twelve months she would consent to become Umar's wife. So she remained for a year shut up in the upper storey pining for the coming of her people. The poems of 'Māruī and Umar', describe the feelings of Māruī locked in her prison rooms and longing to be released by her people, the rustic camelherds and goatherds of Malīr.

I

When there fell on mine ears the Word,
'Am I not then your Lord ?'
And with 'Yes' my heart gave assent,
It was then that my promise I made
With the folk in the hedges pent

'Twas my fate to be prisoned It falls !
How else would one enter these walls ?
They were shown me by writ of the stone
My life, body, life have no joy
If I be from the goatherd alone

O Lord, by thy will this decree,
With her Mārūs that Māruī be
Life engaoled was the fate that I took,
That I should live miserable here
'Body here, soul with Thee', saith the Book

Here's my heart ! Let the power of God move
 That I join with the friends whom I love
 ' Bound by fate ' is the saying that I
 Keep in fold of my garment ' Fate's pen
 With what came to pass is gone dry '

By the flow of fate's pen so it passed
 That the Mārūs should traverse the waste,
 While I in the upper-rooms stay
 I'll burn all these places with fire
 If the folk of my land are away

' To their Prime go all things back again '
 For my people I suffer in pain,
 My folk of the jungle, that, near
 Mine abode come again, I may see
 The land of mine own in Malir

II

Mārūi

No one came no one came not a single soul came
 Not one of the camelherds came
 Of my brothers not one took the trouble to come
 Who will carry and tell me their news ?
 O Allāh, I pray bring me here, bring me now
 Some one from the camelherds there,
 That the bounds of the fort and the roads may be glad
 His feet that are covered with dust
 With mine eyes I shall wipe for he'll not (saith Latif)
 Make any delay when he comes
 Who is she who spends her sad life in the rooms ?
 Living here in the halls my mind reels

Sayid

Today with good tidings the camelherd's come !
 Let thine husband not pass from thy thought
 Nor prove thyself mad Thou wilt come here again
 But thou art in the fort for a space
 Thou art here in the fort for a space Give not up
 Thy rough rugged blanket at all
 O woman of charm, here's the pride of thy stock
 From the prime Worthy soul, till the end
 Show thy grace of behaviour in all that thou dost
 At long last thou wilt come to Malir

Mārū

I shall fall at the feet of the man who has come
 From my country, my father's own home
 I shall speak (Sayid saith) the true thoughts of mine heart
 I am not to blame for this thing
 And I swear that alone I'd have never come here

III

O Allāh ! May the Mārūs I adore,
 The Mārū goatherds, find a joy in me
 All wicked full of evil though I be,
 Still these my friends are merciful Now o'er
 Malir the rains have fallen and the sound
 Of warbling birds thrills all the deserts round
 With garment full of faults that have no end
 I'm come, filled full of evil things galore
 O cover up my faults, Thou Coverer-Friend

IV

My bodice is stitched hundred times
 My blanket is tattered and torn
 I spun not a yard in the hope
 Help would come from my family-born
 Oh ! I pray kind protection I get
 From the clothes that in Dhat I had worn

My bodice is stitched hundred times
 My blanket is tattered and frayed
 Let my locks remain greasy no scent
 Do I put on my hair disarrayed
 One longing there lives in my heart
 To see face of my Mārū displayed
 Let me go to my home in the hedge,
 As I am now, a miserable maid

My bodice is stitched hundred times
 My blanket is tattered and torn
 Let me go to the deserts like this
 That the Mārūs may say ' She was borne
 By the hope we should speed for her aid '
 I am come from that place where no sign
 Of the safflower is seen If I went
 Where the throngs of the marriages shine,
 In rough blankets I'd find me arrayed

V

Māruī doth not wash her hair
 Māruī doth not smile nor eat
 Māruī's praise for ever sings
 The justice of her Umar's ways
 ' This wrong that thou hast done to me
 Will turn and look thee in the face '

Māruī doth not wash her hair
 Her locks are sullied High-souled lass,
 Her memory for the goatherds stayed,
 Goatherds who live among the grass
 Without them, Umar, she will not
 Pent in the rooms a lifetime pass

Māruī doth not wash her hair,
 Imprisoned in the upper-rooms
 Without her Mārūs On her head
 She puts no soap, nor to her hair
 Incense applies Within the fort
 How will she stay, accustomed
 To company of folk from there ?

Māruī doth not wash her hair
 She hath no gladness On her ears
 Of Umar's justice echo falls
 Her constant cry is ' Allāh ! hear
 My people come not back for me '

Māruī's wearied of the halls,
 And sad with sadness is her face
 On oil-less hair she puts no oil
 By grief she's robbed of beauty's grace
 When hot wind touched her (saith Latīf)
 Her camphor-scents of gladness fled
 How can the girls whose mounds are crushed
 Smile and put oil upon the head ?
 She turns her face towards Malir,
 To weep for ever with the cry
 ' I think thy joy like gallows-noose,
 O Sūmrō Mārū's stuff am I
 A wife by force I will not be
 My heart the men from yonder seized
 Fort-bound it never can be free '

She turns her face towards Malir,
 Outwearied standing yet retains
 The blanket that the Mārūs gave
 Beware, O Sūmrō, not with chains
 Enshackle thou a virtuous slave

' I turned my face towards Malir
 I climbed the fort For my land's sake
 My tears welled forth I shrieked aloud
 With cry that from my soul did break
 And yet the people of the hedge
 Heard nothing of my wretchedness
 O Umar, how can helpless girls
 Bedeck themselves in cleanly dress
 Whose hapless husbands in the wastes
 Endure the insults of distress ?
 Can they, O Sūmrō, good wives be
 Who with their husbands break their vows ?
 While I am sleeping on the quilts
 My husband suffers damp wind blows
 O do not that, mine Umar, no !
 Nor laugh at me in my rough clothes
 How can I sleep upon the quilts
 When husband suffers in the waste ?
 That I should suffer thirst more meet
 Midst father's kindred Take away,
 O Sūmrō, all thy sherbets sweet '

VI

Mārūi

Kind sir, mine heart is linked with them
 Who in hedged-hamlets live their day
 O let me there amidst my friends
 Drink whey, the thin and washy whey
 While still I live I shall not cease
 To follow my beloved's feet
 No blame it is to me that here
 Alone I be But friends to greet
 In mine own country is my wish,
 Those friends who wear the rugged sheet
 For two days' pleasure can I slough
 My blanket that is coarse and rough ?

Mārūī

VII

I have ruined my beauty, O Sūmrō,
 And sullied my face
 Fate compelled me to go rett of beauty
 Where in going's no grace
 I have ruined my beauty, O Sūmrō,
 Hither journeying on
 Can I make up, then, loss of what's fled me,
 Its flavours all gone ?
 I have ruined my beauty, O Sūmrō
 To my land can I come
 Leaving beauty behind ? Can I see them,
 The goatherds of home ?
 As my coming was, so is my going
 Back to them ' Like the rain
 Blushes poured ' (saith Latīf) ' oft and often '
 A reproach and a bane
 Was my life passed in those upper-storeys
 Till life die with the dead
 Come thus wise, I have need of my husband
 Can I lift up my head
 In front of my Mārūs ? O Umar !
 O Sūmrō ! Consign
 My life to the pit Way of goatherds
 Was no way of mine
 With what face can I go to my country ?
 Better had she ne'er been
 Who, to Umarkōt come, her rough blanket
 Disgraced nor had seen
 Light of birth, but had died With her calling
 Of goatherds in aid,
 Could she smile within upper-storeys ?
 O Allāh ! I prayed
 That I die in my prison My body
 In chains, let me cry
 Night and day but first go I homewards
 Ere, days ended, I die
 O Allāh, imprisoned I wash not
 Clothes worn old and long
 O Master, insult hath no answer
 Umar Sūmrō is strong
 Make him kind to me, Merciful Master ,
 I have hopes of my spouse

Let me see him in village enclosure
 Had the folks of mine house
 Gathered news of my plight, then the captive
 Had not thought of her jail
 The Mārūs mayhap had forgotten
 Home-longings prevail
 I am ready to die with their memory
 My corse, Lord, convey
 To my home that in graveyard of Mārūs
 In fixed peace I may stay
 Perchance in my death I'd be living,
 Were my corse in Malīr
 At the times when rain falls I have trystings
 With the friends that I love
 If I go with the villagers, somehow
 My need I'll remove

VIII

Mārūi

O Sūmrō, how can I stop the thoughts
 That dwell with my herding men?
 They are riveted into my life without
 The aid of the blacksmith's skill
 The nails of love in my heart are fixed
 To be counted in thousand's tale
 Since I saw the huts and herding-men
 The days are passed and fled
 Not for the herdsmen's wives at all
 Are clothes that are made of silk
 When they dye in lāc their coarse rough cloth
 They're finer than clad in shawls
 Better than wool and fine striped cloth,
 Better than velvet too,
 Better than rich broadcloth do I think
 My coarse rough blanket to be,
 Better, O Sūmrō, than gorgeous clothes
 I should die of shame if I doffed
 The blanket I had of my father's folk
 My wounds have started afresh that I got
 At the well-to-do villagers' hands
 In my longing for union with them I feel
 Separation that cuts to the quick
 My mind kept a place, O Sūmrō, for them
 Whose huts in the desert stand

The dwelling place of the Mārū throng
 I long for exceedingly
 Weep not, nor wail, nor let tears flow
 Such days as pass, endure
 Come sorrows first then happy joys
 Of pleasance, O man of flocks

Sayid

'Ease is with trouble' this, herdsman, feel
 O virtuous girl, preserve
 Thy virtuous way, (saith Latīf) from thee
 Will the iron shackles fall

Mārūī

Mine heart is Mārū's, his heart's mine
 My face, O Sūmrō, then
 May sullied stay, lest he should say
 'Thou didst go mid stranger men
 To wash it clean' And now I go,
 From thee having trafficked the tears that flow

GLOSSARY OF UNCOMMON WORDS FOUND IN THE POEMS

Adēsīs	Type of wandering ascetics , literally ' people without country '
Alif	First letter of the Arabic alphabet
Āri	Name for Punhūn, lover of Sasui
Āriyānī	Name of a Balūchī tribe
Āricha	Name of a Balūchī tribe
Bairāgi or Berāgi	Type of Hindu ascetic
Barōch	Another form of Balūch
Bhambhōr	Town in Lower Sind where Sasui lived
Bhuḡ	Town in Cutch
Bījal	Name of the singer in the story of ' The King and the Minstrel '
Bikanīr	Town in Rājputāna
Chanēsar	Name of Lila's husband, a powerful man in Lower Sind
Dām	Name of Suhni's husband
Dāsō	Name of a Sindhi tribe living chiefly in Lower Sind
Dhat	A place in Lower Sind
Dhōhō	Term of endearment used by Mōmul of her lover Rānō Literally means ' darling '
Diāch	Name of the King in the story of ' The King and the Minstrel '
Girnār	In Kāthiawār
Gūrū	Hindu religious Master and Instructor
Hārthō	Name of a hill in Lower Sind
Hātim	Hātim of Tai Used in the sense of a very wealthy man or Croesus
Hōt	Literally means ' friend ' Used by Suhni of Punhūn her lover
Hur	Used of Husain in the story of ' The Martyrs ' and means the enthusiastic ' or ' zealous ' one
Īd	Muhammadan holiday or festival
Imām	Refers to Hassan and Husain in the story of ' The Martyrs '
Ināyat	Name of a Sindhi poet
Jaisalmir	A State in Rājputāna bordering on Sind
Jabāt	A place in Lower Sind
Jōga	Sindhi form of Yōga
Jūnējō	Name of a Sindhi poet
Kāk	A lake in Lower Sind
Kāmbhō	Name of a hill in Lower Sind
Kārō	Name of a hill
Kaunru	Name of the servant girl in the story of ' Lila and Chanēsar
Kēchī	Native of Kēch i.e. Kēch Mekrān in Balūchistān bordering on Sind
Kelāt	A State in Balūchistān bordering on Sind
Khāhōris	A kind of wandering religious ascetics
Kūfa	Town which played false in the battle which resulted in the death of Husain

Lāc	Resinous exudation on the bark of trees used for making dyes
Lāhut	Name of a village in Balūchistān, metaphorically one of the stages in the Sūfī's search for his ideal, literally means 'non-existence'
Lakhmīr	Name of a Sindhi poet
Liār	Name of a shrub which grows in dry places
Līlan	Wife of Chanēsar, whom she tried to deceive
Ludhō	Name of a place in Lower Sind
Lūt	Name of a shrub which grows in dry places
Malīr	Place in Lower Sind
Mārū	Hero of the tale of Mārūī. Mārū is also the name of a Sindhi tribe living largely in Lower Sind and engaged in keeping camels and cattle
Mārūī	Heroine of the tale of Mārūī and means a woman of the Mārū tribe
Māhār	Buffalo keeper. One of the names given to Punhūn
Mindhro	Name of a Sindhi tribe living in Lower Sind
Mīr	Lord or Ruler
Mōmul	Heroine of the tale of Mōmul and Rānō
Munkar	One of the angels of death
Nakīr	One of the angels of death
Nāngas	Hindu ascetics who wear no clothing. Literally 'naked ones'
Padam	A lake in Lower Sind
Pubb	A mountain in Lower Sind
Punhūn	Name of Sasūī's lover
Rām	Rāma
Rāhū	Prince or a powerful person
Rānō	Name of Mōmul's lover
Rūm	Literally Turkey, but used of Central Islāmic Europe
Sāhur	Name of Suhinī's lover. 'Helper'
Sāhwan	Rainy season in Sind—July and August
Sanyāsī	A type of Hindu ascetic
Sasūī	Hero of the tale of Sasūī, a Brāhman girl from Bhambhōr
Sōdha	Name of a tribe of Rājput origin living in Lower Sind
Sōrath	Wife of King Diāch
Suhinī	Heroine of the tale of Suhinī.
Sūmrō	Sindhi tribe. At one time rulers of Sind
Swāmī	Hindu religious teacher
Thōrī	Name of a wandering tribe
Ulwahēt	One of the stages in the Sūfī's progress
Umar	Name of the Chief in the tale of Mārūī
Umarkōt	Town in Lower Sind
Wankār	Name of a barren hill
Windar	Name of a hill in Lower Sind
Yazīd	Enemy of Hassan and Husain in the story of 'The Martyrs'

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